- **LIFESTYLE / C1**
2bU! lists 100 ways to change the world in this season of joy

- **METRO / A20**
Heads will roll, says BI chief, following escape of 3 foreigners from BI jail

- **NEWS / A2**
NBI chief's post jinxed? 4 nearly successive directors die in office

- **BUSINESS / B1**
Gov't to install new board at Maynilad; 84% to be sold in 1st quarter

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Wednesday, December 21, 2005 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 13 P18

Believe it or not, BIR makes it to antigraft body honor roll

I LIKE TO BELIEVE!

By Christine Avendaño

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue is dusting off its image as one of the most corrupt government agencies and has landed on the winning side of the

BELIEVE/ A7

Panganiban named 21st SC Chief Justice

PANGANIBAN: I celebrate birth of the One who came to earth.

Significance of timing not lost on the 1st to be named in 21st century

By Christine O. Avendaño, Armand Nocum and Juliet Labog-Javellana

HE ROSE FROM POVERTY, SELLING NEWSPAPERS and shining shoes as a boy, to the highest post in the judiciary that a lawyer can achieve.

Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban was named Supreme Court Chief Justice last night by President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom he helped install to power during a popular uprising four years ago.

"President Arroyo has appointed Artemio Panganiban as the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a brief statement, without elaborating.

Panganiban is the country's first chief justice to be appointed in the 21st century.

On assuming his new post, the 69-year-old Panganiban will be immediately facing tough legal challenges revolving around the constitutionality of two controversial orders from Malacanang

PANGANIBAN/ A18

GRACE CANTAL ALBASIN PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

CITY OF GOLDEN LIGHTS. It used to be dull, dark, dreary, and a no-no place at nightfall. But no longer since Misamis Oriental Gov. Oscar Moreno cleaned up and beautified the provincial capital complex in Cagayan de Oro City. In this magical season of the unbearable lightness of being, Moreno's shimmering golden ark fronting the capitol is now the destination for locals to savor that goodwill and spirit of joy that only Christmas gives.

It's final: Cory, kin lose Hacienda Luisita

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PRESIDENTIAL AGRARIAN Reform Council yesterday decided with finality to acquire the vast sugar estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino and distribute it to the farm workers who had tilled the land for decades.

Voting 10-1 with two abstentions, the PARC en banc upheld the earlier recommendation of the Department of Agrarian Reform to revoke the stock distribution option (SDO) at the 4,915-hectare Hacienda Luisita of the Cojuangcos.

Some described the landmark decision of the Philippines' highest policymaking body on agrarian reform as a correction of history; others viewed it as simply a conscientious move.

The final decision ended 16 years of what the DAR had de-

IT IS FINAL/ A5

Gov't to Meralco: Pay P42-B debt in 3 yrs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION is offering a three-year repayment plan for the P42-billion debt allegedly owed by Manila Electric Co. to state-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor) to avert a messy government takeover of the Lopez-run utility.

Meralco is contesting the government claim that it owes Napocor P42 billion.

In a memorandum to President Macapagal-Arroyo, one of her consultants who refused to be named because of the confidential nature of the discussions, said the government was willing to take in P14 billion a year for three years from Meralco to pay for its debts to Napocor.

In return, the presidential consultant said Meralco would continue to purchase its power from First Generation Holdings Corp. (First Gen), the country's most profitable power-based company owned by the Lopez family.

The administration is bent on collecting on Napocor's entire

GOV'T/ A6

RP in world freedom poll: From free to partly free

WASHINGTON—WHILE WORLD freedom made significant advances in countries from the Ukraine to Indonesia, the Philippines suffered a ratings downgrade to "partly free" from "free" in an annual global survey.

In its annual report rating every nation in the world as "free," "partly free" or "not free," Freedom House on Monday also expressed concern about countries like the United States and France where the independent monitoring group saw "looming problems" with electoral set-ups and immigrant integration.

In its survey report, "Freedom in the World," the monitoring group noted that the number of electoral democracies rose from

RP IN WORLD/ A7

SC gives gov't go-signal to take over Naia 3

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERday gave the government the green light to take over Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) when it affirmed the decision of a lower court requiring the government to pay P3 billion to Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco).

Piatco is the consortium led by Germany's Fraport AG that built the terminal.

In an 11-4 decision, the Supreme Court upheld with modification the Jan. 4, 2005, order of Judge Henrick Gingoyon of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 117 allowing Piatco to receive $62 million or P3 billion of a government deposit.

"Wherefore, the petition is granted in part with respect to the orders dated 4 January 2005 and 10 January 2005 of the lower court," the high court said in a decision penned by Associate Justice Dante Tinga.

SC GIVES/ A5

Baguio docs, nurses form Christmas 'rondalla' to benefit cancer patients

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—EXASPERATED at government neglect of health programs for cancer patients, a group of medical workers and retired teachers is raising funds through caroling after taking a crash course in playing *rondalla* instruments.

The Philippine Cancer Volunteers' *rondalla* spent six months learning Christmas carols on instruments they had never touched in their lives, said group founder Dr. Clemente Lo, a 64-year-old cancer specialist.

Last week, when the city government lighted up newly installed street lamps for the Christmas holidays, they performed before friends, tourists and strollers at Burnham Park.

Friends knew they were amateurs but most of their audience seemed oblivious of their minor instrument miscues as they caroled their way into

BAGUIO/ A6

AFP

GIFTS FROM THE SEA: Former fisherman Arnel Rebate now sculpts logs washed ashore by back-to-back typhoons last year.

From nets to chisels: Fishermen carve hope out of Quezon tragedy

GENERAL NAKAR, QUEZON—Former fisherman Arnel Rebate pulls out a gnarled chunk of hard wood from a pile salvaged from the shores of the raging Agos River and lets his imagination get to work.

"I will carve this into yet another torso of a naked woman," the 36-year-old father of two says, pointing to a V-shaped portion of the damp, deep brown Philippine ebony that he says will form the outstretched arms of the sculpture he has christened "Diana."

About this time last year, however, Rebate could barely look at the logs that had washed up on the shores of Agos without shedding tears of rage and frustration.

Back-to-back typhoons had dislodged tens of thousands of illegally cut timber from the slopes of the Sierra Madre mountain range, mixing with mud and floodwaters in a deadly avalanche that buried the tiny

FROM NETS/ A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/12/21/05 SOURCE PAGASA

Second FRONTPAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Jueteng's back, Hagedorn reports

By Jerry E. Esplanada

ORGANIZED JUETENG IS BACK.

The illegal numbers game persists in Quezon province despite President Macapagal-Arroyo's order for the total eradication of jueteng, according to government anti-jueteng czar and Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

The jueteng operations in the Southern Luzon province are allegedly run by Rosario "Charing" Magbujos, said to be one of the region's top gambling lords.

Hagedorn yesterday said he was "set to call the President and give her an update on this negative development."

"Reports on the resumption of organized jueteng in Quezon province have been confirmed to me by people I personally know, people I trust. The same reports pointed to Charing Magbujos as the one behind the resumption of the illegal numbers game there," he told the INQUIRER.

Hagedorn wondered aloud if some PNP and military personnel were part of the resumption of the illegal numbers game.

He described Magbujos as "one of veteran jueteng operators [in Southern Luzon]. Everyone knows that."

HAGEDORN

"*Alam mo 'yang mga gambling* lords *talagang kukuha't-kukuha ng tiyempo 'yan. Hindi ordinary-ong negosyo itong pinapatay natin.* Multi-billion, *eh. Kaya pag nakakita ng butas babanat at babanat ang mga 'yan* (You know, these gambling lords are just waiting for the right time. This is no ordinary business we're stopping. This is worth billions. So if these business men see an opportunity, they will move in), especially during the Christmas season. They may be tempted to take the risk," Hagedorn said.

He emphasized that he was "not talking about guerrilla-type operations. This is organized jueteng, really a cause of alarm as far as the anti-jueteng task force is concerned."

He was not surprised at all about the resumption of the illegal numbers game.

"The problem now is the mayors may no longer be able to control, if not totally stop jueteng operations in their respective towns or cities," the Palawan mayor pointed out.

He also said he would also look into reports that "guerrilla-type" jueteng operations in Albay and other Luzon provinces, including Laguna, Batangas and Nueva Viscaya, had the blessings of a top official of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Hagedorn did not identify the DILG executive.

He had earlier told the President that "jueteng would be totally eradicated only if the legal alternatives are put in place. I made that very clear to her."

Early this month, Hagedorn warned that jueteng would be back if the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) and other government agencies tasked with providing skills training, livelihood and job opportunities for the displaced 200,000-plus jueteng workers did not do anything soon.

He called the now jobless jueteng workers "potential terrorists, drug pushers and petty criminals."

The Palace had approved the anti-jueteng task force's recommendation to replace the popular illegal numbers game with any "tried and tested" game of chance like the Small Town Lottery (or STL) and EZ 2, both of which have distinct similarities with jueteng.

Hagedorn said STL "is the best legal substitute" for jueteng. He reiterated "the ball is now on the PCSO's court," adding "things seem to be moving at a snail's pace."

Last May, the President declared that she would spare no one in her all-out war on illegal numbers games.

She called for stricter enforcement of the anti-gambling law, Republic Act No. 9287, to stamp out all games of chance, specifically jueteng, masiao and "last two digits," which are popular among the poor.

COCO LEVY COMPROMISE

'No deal with plunderers'

By Michael Lim Ubac

MILITANT LAWMAKERS YESTERday denounced the proposed compromise agreement on the P130-billion coconut levy funds, saying it was "politically and morally wrong to strike a deal with plunderers."

Party-list Representatives Rafael Mariano and Etta Rosales deplored what they said was the Arroyo administration's "newest attempt to strike a highly unacceptable deal" with business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco on the disposition of the money from the controversial levy imposed on coconut farmers by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"This is another outright betrayal of public interest, particularly small coconut farmers' interests, by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo," said Mariano.

Mariano, who represents the Anakpawis party-list group, is the author of House Bill 3728, also known as the "Genuine Small Coconut Farmers' Funds Act of 2005."

On Monday, Camilo Sabio, the chair of Presidential Commission on Good Government, said in a statement that the agency would look favorably on a compromise deal with Cojuangco, who was appointed as administrator of the levy by Marcos and who is now the main respondent in hundreds of graft cases filed by the PCGG in connection with the levy funds.

The PCGG, representing the claims of the country's small coconut farmers, claims that Cojuangco and his associates used the levy funds, now grown to P130 billion, to buy controlling shares in the United Coconut Planters Bank, the San Miguel Corp. and several coconut-related businesses grouped under the Coconut Industry Investment Fund.

Sabio said the cases against Cojuangco and his associates could take so long to resolve that a compromise was a reasonable suggestion.

"This could be resolved beyond our lifetime. So some people have suggested, why not a compromise? I think the parties will not wait for the cases," he said.

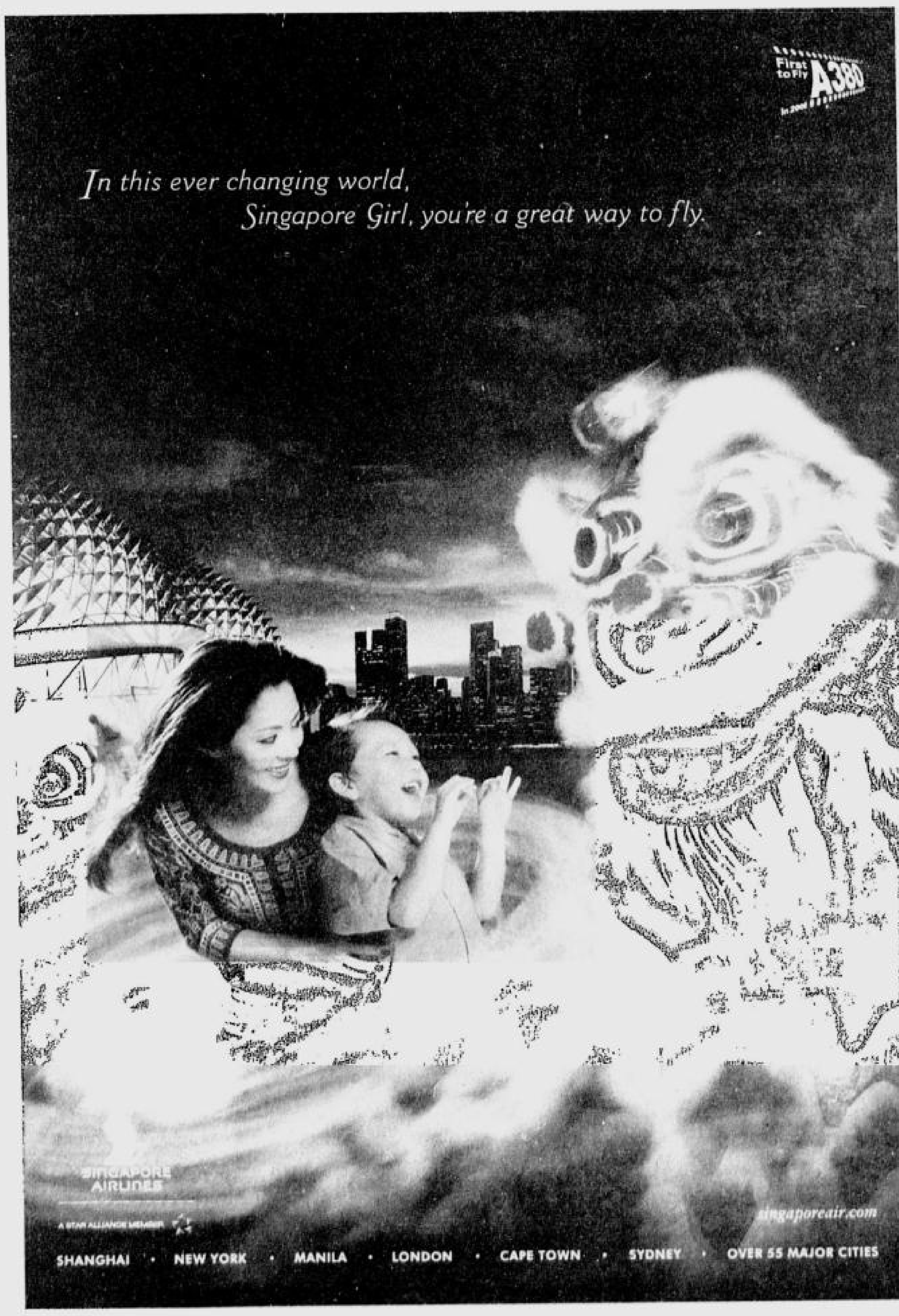
Rosales said the proposal was a "bad deal."

"There is jurisprudence to say that the coco levy funds are intended for modernizing the coco industry and promoting welfare of coco farmers. The late PCGG chair Haydee Yorac fought such [a] compromise," she said.

Rosales said the government should push for the early resolution of the coco levy cases "in favor of state and farmers."

"The funds cannot be touched or used ... There are 200 civil, criminal cases that must be resolved against Marcos, Cojuangco, etc," said Rosales.

Mariano said this newest attempt to iron out the "long-planned GMA-Danding deal would definitely fast-track Ms Arroyo's ouster from power."



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NBI pushes through with Christmas party

By Luige A. del Puerto and Margaux C. Ortiz

HE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD IT ANY OTHER way.

Officials of the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday decided to push through with their Christmas party despite NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco's death Monday night.

"He would have wanted the employees to be happy this Christmas," said NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring in an interview.

The Christmas party was stripped of the usual revelry, however, and Mantaring said they decided to cancel the performances of comedians Allan K and Ai-Ai de las Alas.

"We made it very simple in deference to the director," said Mantaring, adding that everyone in the bureau was grieving for Wycoco.

Some of the bureau's division chiefs also said they were pushing through with their own scheduled Christmas parties in the next few days.

"Director Wycoco was concerned with the bureau employees' happiness," said NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap. But the celebrations would be "as simple as possible," he stressed.

Where he grew up

Mantaring said Wycoco's remains would be brought to the NBI at 2 p.m. today where they will lie until Saturday when he will be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

Yesterday, Wycoco returned to the place "where he grew up" as the Philippine National Police paid tribute to the mild-mannered former police officer at Camp Crame.

His dark brown coffin arrived at Crame late in the afternoon and was placed in the PNP Multi-Purpose Hall, where full honors were accorded. Outside, a brass band played a dirge and the sun began to set.

"He has come back to the place where he grew up," said his wife Lucilla. "This was where he became a full colonel and a general. When I met him, he was still a young lieutenant."

The Wycocos, who have four children, married in 1971, the same year they met. Their eldest, Patricia, was married just last September.

Lucilla managed a smile as she spoke with the media. Nearby, Wycoco's father Pedro and mother Lolita sat, with a dolorous but dignified air. Pedro Wycoco is a former Philippine Constabulary officer.

"They're okay. When he (Wycoco) went into a coma, they slowly accepted his fate," said another daughter-in-law Gloria Wycoco.

Before he became NBI director in 2001, Wycoco was the deputy chief for administration, the second in command of the 115,000-strong police force. He was also once chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, one of the most prestigious PNP posts.

Wycoco's remains were met by Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon in the absence of Director General Arturo Lomibao who is in Australia on official business.

DEATH AT THE NBI

'No jinx, just coincidence'

By Margaux C. Ortiz

EVEN WITH THE UNTIMELY DEATHS OF four of their directors, officials and personnel of the National Bureau of Investigation still do not think the office is jinxed.

"The deaths of the four NBI directors were merely coincidental," said NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring in an interview.

Almost in succession, NBI Directors Antonio Aragon, Santiago Toledo, Federico Opinion Jr., and now Reynaldo Wycoco, died while in office.

Clarissa Gonzales, who has served as the director's secretary since the tenure of Alfredo Lim, who is now a senator, agreed with Mantaring.

"*Wala namang* jinx, *nagkataon lang 'yun* (There is no jinx... it was just coincidence)," said Gonzales.

She said most of the NBI chiefs, including the four who died in office, consulted feng shui experts when they fixed up their offices.

"They wanted to be sure the office would bring them good luck," Gonzales said.

Both Wycoco and Aragon died after presiding over meetings in their offices.

Wycoco had just ended a case conference at his office at around 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 23 when he suddenly collapsed.

Among those he was meeting with was his younger brother police Supt. Edgardo Wycoco.

Aragon complained of chest pains while meeting with other NBI officials working on the Vizconde massacre case on June 22, 1995. A diabetic, Aragon died the next morning at the age of 64. His children said he had had a heart condition for eight years.

Toledo died of an enlarged heart and acute pulmonary edema, a form of cardiac arrest, on May 1, 1999. He had suffered a heart attack on the morning of his birthday in his Quezon City home and died a few hours later at the nearby Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

He was supposed to have retired on the day he died, but former President Joseph Estrada had extended his term for two months, saying it was his "birthday gift" to the director.

Opinion died on Dec. 15, 2000, of kidney failure and diabetes at the National Kidney Institute. He was 62.

A rainy Christmas Day for some

By Norman Bordadora

A COLD FRONT CAUSING ISOLATED RAINS in Luzon is expected to sweep southward toward Visayas and Mindanao, according to the weather bureau.

This could mean a rainy Christmas Day in the eastern part of Visayas and Mindanao, said Nathaniel Cruz, chief of the weather branch of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

"Still, we'll be having a news conference tomorrow to come up with a more definite and accurate forecast of the weather conditions on Christmas Day," he said.

Pagasa had come up with a system that extended its weather outlook from three days to five days. Still, changes in the weather may alter the five-day outlook, so next-day forecasts remain the most accurate.

"We want to tell the people what the weather would be like. This is particularly helpful for those planning outdoor activities such as garden dinners and barbecues," Cruz said.

He added that there was still no tropical cyclone within the Philippine area of responsibility. The cold front in Luzon and the intertropical convergence zone down south were causing the rains.

"This has been an abnormal month. Storms usually come by in the first two weeks of December; the rains stop in the latter half," Cruz said.

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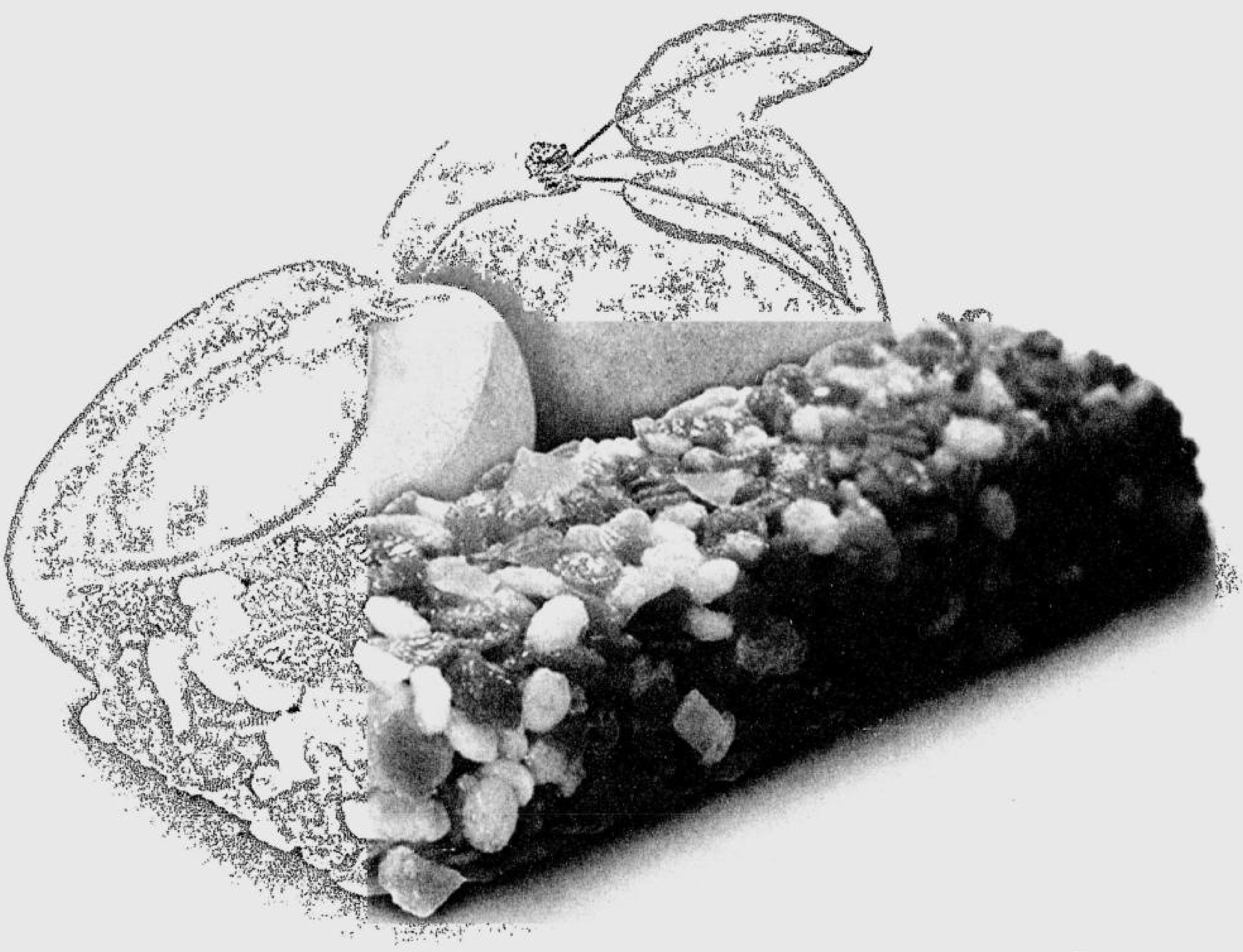

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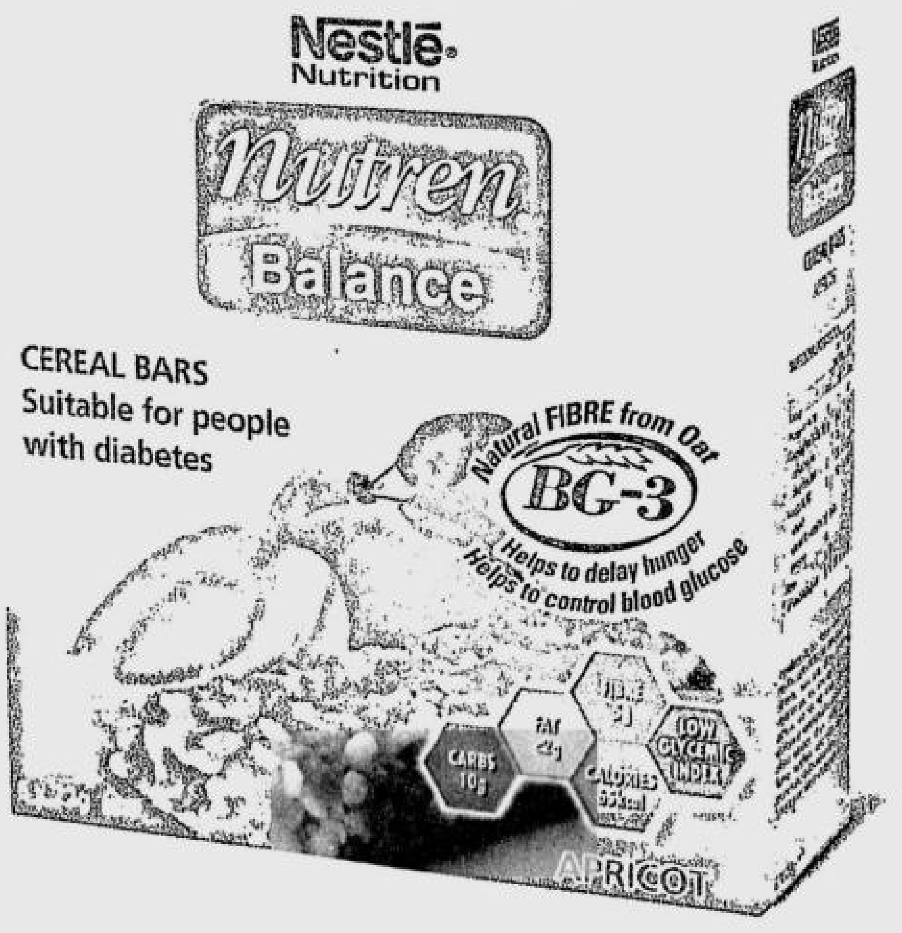
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I want them in jail, cries rape victim

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—"I WANT TO see them in jail."

The 22-year-old Filipina who sued six American soldiers for alleged rape issued the statement on Monday, hours after her lawyers filed the final arguments for her case before the prosecutor's office here.

The woman's lawyer, Katrina Legarda, quoted her client as saying: "It doesn't matter much to me where the prison is, as long as they are in jail."

Legarda said her client also wanted Timoteo Soriano Jr. in jail.

Soriano drove the van where the alleged abuse took place at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1.

The woman's statements, the first she gave to reporters since the supposed incident happened, came as two prosecutors here prepared to decide whether to charge the American soldiers with rape.

City Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni and Assistant Prosecutor Raymond Viray would issue the resolution on Dec. 27.

Through their respective lawyers, Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier, Corporal Corey Burris, Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantis and Albert Lara, had asked for the dismissal of the complaint.

They said there was "no probable cause" to charge them with rape and conspiracy to commit the crime.

Smith said he had consensual sex with the woman.

Carpentier, Silkwood and Duplantis denied raping the woman or seeing Smith abuse her inside the van. Burris and Lara denied being in the van at the time of the incident. Burris also said he was mistaken for Duplantis.

Lara said he did not fit the description of a Caucasian-looking suspect because of his Mexican-American features.

Abat fights back, sues DOJ

By Nelson F. Flores

MULTIPLE CRIMINAL CHARGES were filed yesterday by retired Gen. Fortunato Abat and the other members of his "revolutionary transition government" against Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, five government lawyers and 10 policemen before the Office of the Ombudsman.

In the 15-page complaint, Abat, former Budget Secretary Salvador Enriquez, ex-Ambassador Roy Señeres and lawyer Carlos Serapio accused Gonzalez and the 15 other respondents of violating Section 3 of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act 3019) and Section 4 of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employee (RA 6713).

The other charges filed were grave threats, grave coercion, prohibition and dissolution of peaceful meeting, theft, falsification by public officers and employees, unlawful arrest, incriminating innocent persons, delay in the delivery of detained persons to the proper judicial authorities, and Articles 282, 286, 131, 308, 269, 363 and 125 of the Revised Penal Code.

The complaint was received by graft investigation and prosecution officer Francisco Alan Molina.

Asked to comment, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said: "We maintain that the police acted legally and in accordance with their mandate."

Bataoil said the PNP was now preparing its legal defense and was "confident" that it would win the case.

He said the charges were simply another "challenge" and "part of the hazard of the service."

"We are used to it. We expect that people will not be happy, especially when they are the subject of law enforcement," Bataoil said.

'Illegal' arrest

Abat proclaimed the "transition government" and declared himself its president midnight of Dec. 13 at the Club Filipino in San Juan.

He and his colleagues were arrested about 35 hours later by 10 members in plainclothes of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), and subsequently charged with inciting to sedition.

All four men are out on bail.

In filing the complaint, their lawyer Homobono Adaza said the arrest disguised as an "invitation" or "citizens' arrest" was "illegal from the start because it was done without a valid warrant of arrest."

Adaza noted that the Supreme Court in the case of Babst vs Intelligence Board had already prohibited authorities from subverting the rules on illegal arrest by "inviting" the arrested person to military or police camps.

"The police cannot deceptively effect a citizens' arrest merely because they are wearing civilian clothes at the time of the arrest," he said.

To stress his point, Adaza pointed out that in a interview with ANC TV, Gonzalez admitted having ordered the arrest of Abat and company on Dec. 14 because of a confluence of events—detained ex-President Joseph Estrada's visit that night to his brother's wake in San Juan, the escape of ex-mutineer Capt. Nicanor Faeldon the previous day, and the rumored coup plot the Sunday before.

"In short, Gonzalez essentially admitted he ordered the arrest of the complainants not because what they were doing was illegal but because of political convenience and out of fear that former President Estrada's presence in San Juan could cause trouble," Adaza said.

'Conspiracy'

Adaza also accused Gonzalez and the CIDG of conspiracy when they supposedly acted in unison "to legitimize and legalize" the arrest of Abat and company.

He said a team of prosecutors was formed and dispatched to the CIDG headquarters even before any charge was filed.

"The government prosecutors, except for Assistant State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon, actually gave the CIDG home service by going to the CIDG headquarters–instead of waiting for CIDG personnel to file formal charges at the Department of Justice," he said. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

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Alleged terrorist leader captured

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY ANnounced it has captured a leader of the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), a group of converts to Islam that the military has linked to the Valentine's Day bombings in Makati, Davao and General Santos cities that killed seven people and wounded at least 60 others.

A military spokesperson said Pio Abogne de Vera was arrested by intelligence agents in Zamboanga City last Dec. 15. The alleged terrorist leader was to have been presented to the public at 10 a.m. yesterday but the military called off a scheduled press conference at the last minute, saying they were "not ready."

The order to cancel the news conference had come from "general headquarters," according to AFP spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison.

De Vera had been identified as the operations officer and second in command of the RSM, which the military has linked to the Abu Sayyaf and the Southeast Asian terrorist network Jemaah Islamiya, both of which are linked to the international al-Qaida terror group.

A sketchy military report given to the media yesterday said "initial tactical interrogation revealed an RSM plot to bomb Manila nightspots." No other details were provided, but intelligence sources who spoke on condition of anonymity said the new plot was to have been carried out this Christmas.

The military had claimed earlier that the RSM was plotting to stage bomb attacks in Manila and other cities around Holy Week last March but that intelligence agents preempted the plan with the discovery and confiscation of 600 kilos of explosives that the terrorists planned to detonate at night spots in Manila's Malate district.

The authorities have described De Vera, who reportedly uses the alias Ismael de Vera, as a bomb expert who trained with Jemaah Islamiyah members in central Mindanao. De Vera was allegedly the one who procured the 600 kilos of explosives, which Isafp agents said they seized in Fairview, Quezon City, last March.

Last Saturday, military intelligence operatives arrested an uncle of actor Robin Padilla in Greenhills, San Juan on the strength of arrest warrants in connection with a murder case and a separate charge of illegal possession of firearms and explosives linked to the RSM. Police said Virgilio Cariño had been linked to the RSM and his co-accused in the explosives possession case included RSM members Tyrone "Dawud" del Rosario Santos and Angelo "Khalil" Trinidad.

Santos, who is out on bail and undergoing trial on another firearms case, is a brother of Hilarion "Ahmad" Santos, the alleged head of the RSM, who was arrested with his wife and six other other people in Zamboanga City last October.

Trinidad is one of three people sentenced to death for the 2005 Valentine's Day bombings in Makati, Davao and General Santos.

Meanwhile, military officials in Zamboanga City announced the arrest early yesterday of one of the alleged abductors of the American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham.

The Southern Command said Aujuin Marail alias Bong was one of the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas who abducted the Burnham couple along with 18 other vacationers at the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan in May 21. Gracia Burnham was rescued by the military in June 2002 in an operation in which her husband was killed along with Filipina nurse Ediborah Yap. *With a report from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

7 drown in Quedan's wake

SEVEN MORE PERSONS drowned and another was still missing after heavy rains brought by typhoon Quedan flooded parts of the Bicol region, Southern Tagalog and Western Visayas.

In Sorsogon, four were swept by rampaging floodwaters while a two-year-old girl drowned in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Two persons drowned in Aklan and Capiz while another was reported missing in Iloilo.

The four fatalities in Sorsogon were identified as Paulo Vargas, 9, of Barangay Bariis, and Criswin Garay, 4, of Barangay Sinibaran—both of Matnog; Angelica Futalan of Barangay Salvacion, Irosin; and Monica Erebe of Barangay San Isidro, Bacon, Sorsogon City.

Earlier reported dead were Efren Reyes, a farmer of Barangay Cadandanan, and Domingo Rodriguez of Barangay San Isidro—both in Bulan.

The six victims in Sorsogon were all swept by floodwaters.

The body of Mary Joy Hermosa, 2, of Bangcoro, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro was found by rescuers on Monday afternoon, two days after she was reported missing.

Armando Duque, regional director of the Office of Civil Defense-IV, said the girl was washed away by floodwaters when Quedan pounded Naujan on Saturday.

In Aklan, the fatalities were identified as Florico Flores, 14, of Oyo Torong St. in the capital town of Kalibo and Joy Eutela, of Barangay Lacaron, Dao town in Capiz.

Editha Esteva, 45, of Barangay Panuan, Lambunao town in Iloilo was still missing as of 10:30 a.m. yesterday, according to a report of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council and the Office of Civil Defense in Western Visayas.

Eight of the 15 municipalities in Sorsogon have been placed under a state of calamity by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Covered are the towns of Matnog, Irosin, Bulan, Magallanes, Juban, Sta. Magdalena, Barcelona and Prieto Diaz.

Floodwaters in these municipalities reached as high as five feet and spilled into dikes, water systems, roads, bridges, fishponds, rice fields and houses.

Based on initial reports, damage to infrastructure in Sorsogon was estimated at P650 million, crops and livestock, P227 million and private properties, P115 million.

In Aklan, Iloilo and Negros Occidental, flooding damaged crops estimated at P37 million while damage to infrastructure reached P6 million, reports reaching the RDCC here said.

A total of 49 barangays were affected by flashfloods: 21 in Aklan, 27 in Iloilo and one in Negros Occidental. The worst hit towns in Aklan were Kalibo, New Washington, Numancia, Banga, Ibajay and Nabas. *Marlon Ramos and Bobby Q. Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

SC gives gov't go-signal to take over Naia 3

From page A1

Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Associate Justices Artemio Panganiban, Renato Corona and Conchita Carpio Morales dissented. (Davide retired on Monday and Panganiban was named chief justice yesterday.)

President Macapagal-Arroyo revoked Piatco's contract with the government, citing what her advisers said were terms that were unfavorable to the government. The deal had been signed by her predecessor, Joseph Estrada, who is now in jail while being tried on charges of plunder.

International arbitration

Fraport AG had demanded compensation of $465 million for the terminal project, and the case is currently under international arbitration. It was not clear how the Supreme Court decision would affect that case.

The troubled Fraport project was begun in 1994, originally by a consortium of Chinese-Filipino businessmen. The group transferred the concession agreement to the Fraport group in 1997.

In December 2004, the lower court issued a writ of possession in favor of the government but later allowed the release to Piatco of the $62-million deposit as a requirement for the takeover of Naia 3.

However, the government questioned the ruling before the high court, arguing that it was only willing to pay a deposit of $9 million, less than what the lower court had awarded to Piatco.

On Jan. 14, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order stopping the implementation of Gingoyon's rulings in favor of Piatco.

In its ruling dated Dec. 19, the high tribunal ordered the lifting of the TRO after finding no grave abuse of discretion on the part of the RTC to warrant the nullification of its orders. But the high court said the rulings should be modified to conform with the law.

"The implementation of the Writ of Possession dated 21 December 2005 is held in abeyance, pending payment by petitioners to Piatco of the amount of P3,002,125,000, representing the proferred value of the Naia 3 facilities," the Supreme Court said.

Determine just compensation

The high court said that upon the effectivity of the writ of possession, the government was authorized to start the implementation of the Terminal 3 project "by performing acts that are essential to the operation" of the project.

"RTC Branch 117 is hereby directed, within 60 days from finality of this decision, to determine the just compensation to be paid to Piatco by the government," the high tribunal said.

The court likewise affirmed the lower court's Jan. 7 order creating a three-member commission to determine just compensation for Piatco, although the high court said the parties have 10 days after finality of its ruling to file any objections against the appointed commissioners.

In questioning the lower court's ruling, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo argued that Rule 67 of the Rules of Court—which requires the government to deposit an amount equivalent to the assessed value of the property for purposes of taxation—should be followed.

But the Supreme Court said the lower court was correct in applying the provisions of Republic Act No. 8974, also known as the Act to Facilitate the Acquisition of Right-of-Way or Location for National Government Infrastructure Projects.

Immediate payment

The law provides that immediate payment to the owner of the property be made before the issuance of the writ of possession, based on the zonal valuation of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, or if no such valuation is available and in cases of utmost urgency, the proferred value of the property.

The high tribunal pointed out that applying Rule 67 would violate its 2004 resolution declaring the Piatco contracts void. It also said that there must be just compensation first before government can take over Terminal 3.

The Supreme Court said that while the RTC had noted that RA 8974 required immediate payment of 100 percent of the value of the property before any takeover, and that Piatco was claiming to have spent at least $350 million for Terminal 3, the P3 billion would do for the meantime because the real cost was still being determined.

The OSG had warned that the government would suffer irreparable injury if the $62 million was immediately released to Piatco because the amount was $9 million more than what the government was willing to give, as stated in its pleading seeking expropriation of the terminal. *With a report from AFP*

It's final: Cory, kin lose Hacienda Luisita

From page A1

scribed as a scheme that further mired the farmers in poverty. But it was also the PARC that had approved the stock distribution option in 1989.

"I am voting according to my conscience, and my conscience tells me to vote 'yes' to the cancellation of the SDO," landowner representative Marita V. Alejandrino said during the hourlong meeting at the Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City.

Alejandrino's was the most applauded vote in the 25-member PARC, she being a close friend and schoolmate of the elder Cojuangcos.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman presided over the meeting because President Macapagal-Arroyo, chair of the PARC en banc, had inhibited herself from taking active part in the council.

'Too many deaths'

"It has gone on for too long... There have been too many deaths already because of Luisita. We have to end this. Too much blood has been spilled," an upbeat farmer-representative Jaime Tadeo said.

Tadeo, a survivor of the infamous "Mendiola massacre" during the Aquino administration, said the PARC decision corrected history and went beyond political vendetta.

Pangandaman said he felt vindicated by the decision upholding the terminal report of the DAR.

Fourteen members of the PARC executive committee voted last week for the revocation of Hacienda Luisita's stock distribution option.

Insiders said the decision of the PARC en banc was just an affirmation of the executive committee's ruling.

The PARC secretariat is to issue a resolution formalizing the decision.

Pangandaman will then issue a notice of coverage to Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI), manager of the estate.

Options

HLI legal counsel Vigor Mendoza said the decision doing away with the stock distribution option would be questioned if it is found to be "contrary to law."

"Pending any formal announcement and [receipt] of the resolution, it may be premature for us to issue a comment. Be that as it may, we are prepared for any eventuality," Mendoza said in a phone interview.

Abstentions

"We'd go over the resolution and decide our option from there. If the decision is contrary to law, then [we'd take the appropriate action]," Mendoza said.

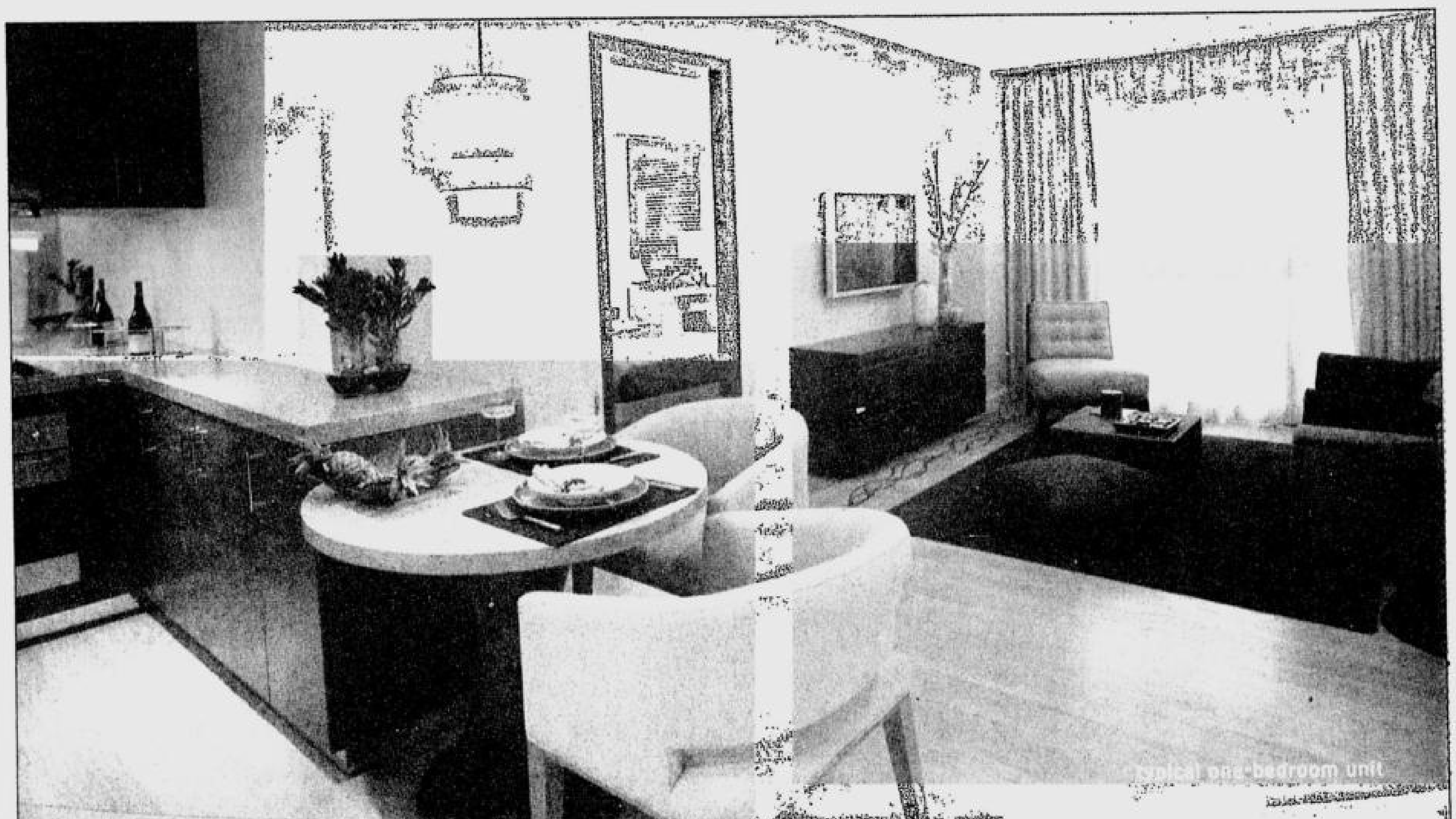
The Department of Trade and Industry and Deputy Executive Secretary Jose Tale, representing the Office of the President, abstained from voting.

Tale said Malacañang wanted to further review pertinent documents and reports. He dodged questions on whether the Office of the President was concerned about the perceived politicization of the Hacienda Luisita case.

"No, we're not. We just want to review the report first," he said when asked if the Office of the President was afraid of the political ramifications of the decision. Then he strode briskly away from reporters.

Former President Aquino is one of the prominent personalities who have called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo as a result of the "Hello Garci" scandal alleging fraud in the May 2004 presidential election.

Representatives of two PARC members, the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Department of Interior and Local Government, were present at the meeting but were unable to vote because they had not been authorized to vote on behalf of the agencies. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*



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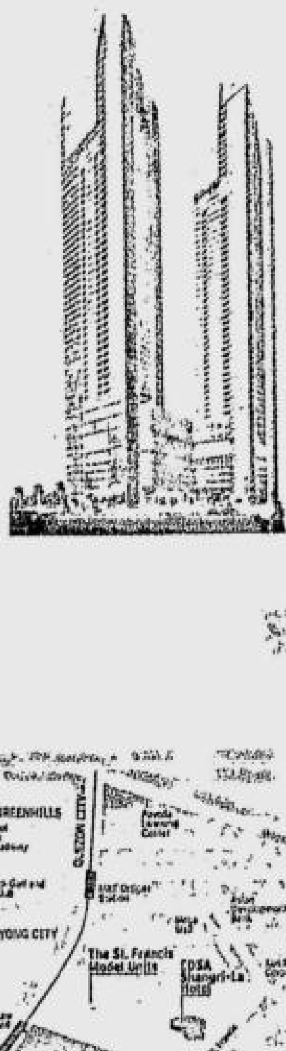

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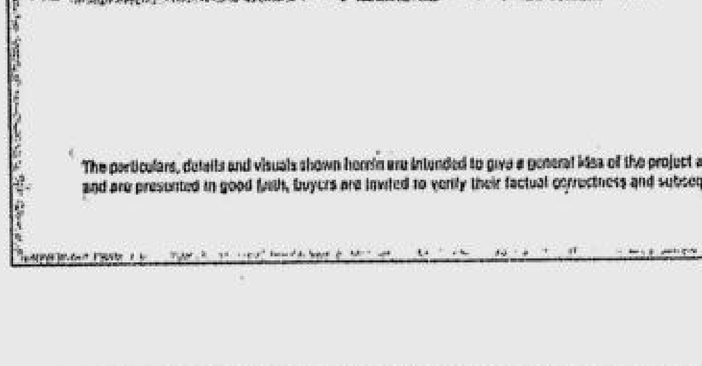

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Meralco hits back at traders' group over P30-B refund

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED MANILA ELECTRIC Co. yesterday slammed the Federation of Philippine Industries for saying that the power distributor was dragging its feet in issuing rebates that were part of the company's P30-billion refund process.

The refund resulted from a Supreme Court ruling in 2003 that Meralco had been overcharging its customers by 16.7 centavos per kilowatt hour since 1994. The court ordered the utility to reimburse its clients whose, excess payments had reached more than P29 billion.

Last and 4th phase

In a statement issued yesterday, Leonardo Mabale, Meralco senior assistant vice president, said the fourth and last phase of the refund process, which covered commercial and industrial customers, was ongoing.

Mabale, also Meralco's refund management task force chief, explained that the distribution utility was, in fact, on track in implementing the refund, based on the timetable set by the Energy Regulatory Commission.

In the first place, if the power distribution firm were a bit behind in refunding commercial, industrial and government entities, this was because the Bureau of Internal Revenue had directed Meralco to serve as a withholding agent for taxes that should be collected from the rebates, he said.

Income tax

The BIR earlier in the year ordered Meralco to withhold a creditable income tax of 25 percent from Phase 4 customers with active accounts and 32 percent from customers with terminated accounts.

Because of this, Meralco had to wait for the BIR to come out with a revenue memorandum order (RMO) outlining how exactly the withholding of the taxes should be done.

"Understandably, it took BIR some time to come out with its guidelines in order to address all the possible legal implications of the order," Mabale said.

"We respect the BIR's position that the refund is taxable on the ground that commercial and industrial taxpayers have already expensed their electricity costs in paying their income taxes and therefore should be taxed on the windfall amounts received as refund," he said.

The RMO came out only in September. After receiving the order, Mabale said Meralco had to tweak its system to ensure that it could effectively process and handle all the Phase 4 refund applications.

The power distributor then started sending out letters last month to customers entitled to the refund, he said. The letters contained the list of documentary requirements that commercial and industrial customers must submit so that they could avail themselves of the rebates.

Low turnout

The turnout of customers submitting their requirements, however, had been quite low, he said.

"We are appealing to our industrial and commercial customers to facilitate the submission of the requirements so we can process the refund," Mabale said.

While the low turnout could delay the last phase of the refund, customers need not worry as the refund implementation would be retroactive to July for those under Phase 4a and to October for those under Phase 4b.

Phase 4a customers include small commercial and industrial customers as well as flat streetlights, including government hospitals and metered streetlights with contracted demand lower than 40 kilowatts (kW).

An ERC order also included all government agencies in this tranche, jacking up refund outlays to P3.3 billion from the earlier earmarked P2.2 billion.

Grandstand

As for FPI president Jesus Arranza's accusations that Meralco was dragging its feet in implementing the P18.6-billion fourth phase of the refund scheme, Meralco vice president Elpi Cuna said the business leader should keep himself more abreast of industry happenings if he were that concerned about the issuance of the refund.

"We could have easily addressed all the issues he raised and avoided this unnecessary controversy had Arranza called our attention," Cuna said. "However, what he did was to grandstand and exploit an issue which, unfortunately for him, is a false issue."

Arranza, accusing Meralco of intentionally delaying the issuance of refunds to commercial and industrial entities, said business groups might revive an earlier proposal to convert their collectibles into equity in the distribution utility.

FPI's members are among the biggest manufacturing firms in the country and have among the biggest collectibles from Meralco.

To support takeover if…

Arranza said that if Meralco continued to delay the refund, FPI members and those of other business groups might be forced to support a proposal that the government take over the utility.

But Cuna said neither the Supreme Court decision ordering Meralco to give back to its customers some P30 billion worth of overcharges from 1994 to 2003 nor the ERC order containing the guidelines for the issuance of the refund said anything about a collectibles-to-equity option.

He said that if Arranza wanted to make a manifestation, this should be filed with the ERC.

Gov't to Meralco: Pay P42-B …

From page A1

P42 billion receivables from Meralco because of the Lopez management's decision not to honor a 10-year supply contract they entered into in 1994.

Because the power demand that Meralco had projected did not materialize due to the Asian financial crisis, its use of power from Napocor fell below the required amount under the contract.

Meralco has been getting part of its power requirements from independent power producers (IPPs). The utility said the Ramos administration had encouraged it to tap power from its IPPs for additional power at the height of the energy crisis in the early 1990s.

Takeover

Another option being considered by Malacañang was the conversion of the debt into equity in Meralco and the takeover of the company to enable the government to reduce electricity rates.

The takeover is being backed by some private corporations who are running out of options in forcing Meralco to cough up the P18 billion in excess charges that the utility had collected, which the Supreme Court ordered refunded to customers in 2003.

The presidential consultant estimated that the Lopez management's decision to buy from its IPPs rather than from Napocor meant P980 million a month in losses for the state-owned firm or nearly P12 billion a year in government subsidies.

Failure to pay the debt would put in jeopardy the government's ongoing restructuring of Napocor into a profitable venture and disappoint foreign investors who acquired Napocor bonds.

The consultant likened Meralco's debt to the 40-centavo cap on purchased power adjustment four years ago that pulled Napocor deeper into a P117-billion pool of red ink by 2003. [It was President Macapagal-Arroyo who ordered the cap.]

The presidential consultant said the government had no choice but to collect on Napocor's collectibles because not doing so could be construed as a sweetheart deal with the Lopezes.

Social equity issue

Another compelling reason for pressing Meralco to settle its obligations was the issue of social equity.

While Meralco's decision to shift to Lopez-owned IPPs would benefit customers in its franchise area, it unduly led to higher power rates in the rest of Luzon, according to the presidential consultant.

He noted that there was no need for Meralco to buy more from First Gen and Quezon Power Philippines because these were already operating at their minimum level of 83 percent.

Any sales above this level were gravy for the Lopez IPPs and more idle power capacity for Napocor, according to the consultant.

Profits soar

In his speech to stockholders in June, Oscar Lopez, First Philippine Holdings chair and CEO, said: "Our power plants, principally [in] Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo [in Batangas] (which provides power to Meralco), have performed efficiently, reliably and at higher output rates as they are more regularly dispatched at or even higher than the Minimum Economic Quantity or MEQ rate of 83 percent. In the past few months, our two power plants have been averaging 85 percent dispatched rate."

First Philippine Holdings (First Holdings) owns 88 percent of First Gen and is the single biggest shareholder of Meralco.

It is no coincidence that since Meralco started buying more from Lopez IPPs than from Napocor, profits of First Holdings had soared to new heights at a time when the Lopez business empire was facing serious financial troubles.

In his speech to stockholders, Lopez cited the company's "highest consolidated operating results in our 43-year history" with revenues hitting nearly P40 billion and operating income of P10 Billion in 2003 and 2004.

Highlight

"For these record aggregates, we continued to lean heavily on the performance of our power generating business, which contributed over 90 percent of the revenues and operating income captured from our subsidiaries," Lopez said.

Lopez said a highlight in First Holding's 2004 operations was the declaration of a P1 cash dividend per share.

"This dividend represents a quantum jump over what we have been able to pay out in the past and it is a dividend we feel we can sustain," said Lopez.

The hefty cash dividends provided the Lopez group with a timely cash infusion it used to pay off maturing debts of the family's other ailing subsidiaries.

Baguio docs, nurses form 'rondalla'

From page A1

people's hearts, playing songs like "Silver Bells" and the "Christmas Polka."

The band may be composed of 40- to 50-year-old nurses, X-ray technicians and retired teachers, but the music that floated across Burnham Lake validated their role as "crusaders."

The *rondalla*, a musical group that uses stringed instruments, has long been part of Filipino heritage.

The guitar brought to the Philippines by the Spaniards inspired the development of the *rondalla* in the country. Filipino ingenuity produced other instruments modeled after it and these joined the guitar in the group of plucked instruments, like the bandurria, bandolina, laud, octavina, double bass and guitar.

Goal: P4.5M

In their first outing as amateur carolers in 2004, Lo's group raised P130,000, Lo said.

Now, they are trying to raise P4.5 million to build the first cancer hospice center outside of Metro Manila by 2006.

Their *rondalla* lessons may just make that happen.

Lo said the government's health program for cancer had remained stagnant "due to budget [restraints]" years after it was launched in 1989.

While government hospitals in Metro Manila had been assured of support from the Philippine Cancer Society, Lo said resources for cancer programs in the provinces had remained "zero."

Doctors find it peculiar to see cancer cases rising while reciprocal medical response is dropping at the same time, Lo said.

Latest figures indicate that one of every 1,000 Filipinos suffers from cancer, he said.

The program got a boost in the 1990s when its most vocal advocate, Dr. Emma Robles, coaxed a P30-million annual allocation from the Department of Health.

When she herself died of cancer, the allocation died with her, Lo said.

Since then, nurses Heidi Farnacio-Garcia, Zenaida Calpotura, Edna Mariano and Lo's wife, Lydia Lagasca, have been looking for ways to raise funds.

They ventured into ordinary caroling activities but this did not suit Lo's taste.

"There's nothing new about caroling. It's so ordinary," he said.

Discovery in Denver

Lo discovered the *rondalla* when he visited a relative in Denver three years ago and they were entertained there by Americans playing Filipino *rondalla* music.

Lo said witnessing Americans play Filipino folk songs gave him food for thought.

"I told my wife, if Americans can be interested in [promoting] our music, why shouldn't we [do the same]?" he said.

"But we didn't know how to start. None of us could play any instrument."

Luck gave them music professor Felipe de la Rosa, who was one of Lo's former students.

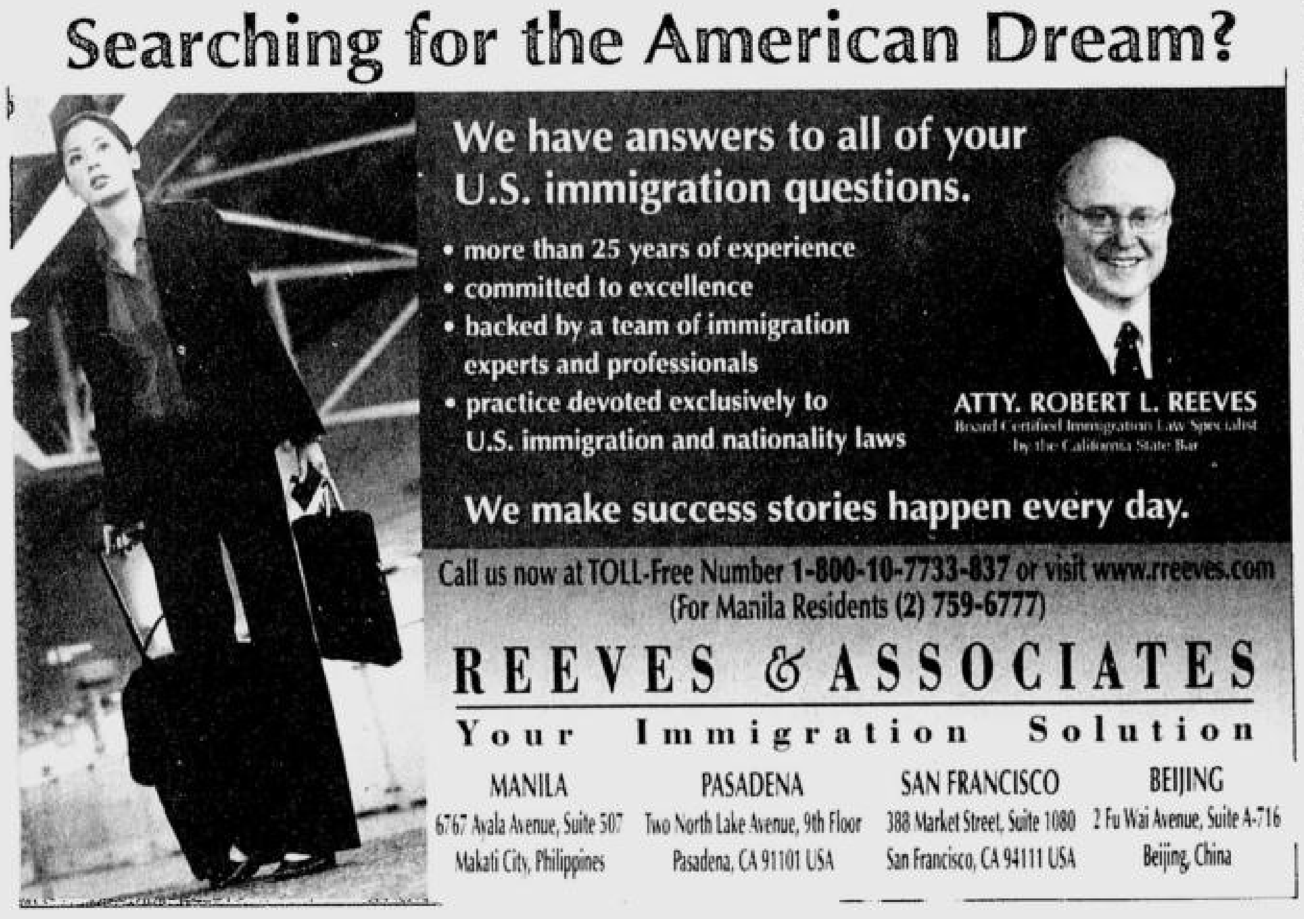
Basic lessons

De la Rosa gathered Lo, the four nurses and 11 other volunteers and taught each of them basic lessons in guitar and bandurria.

They were joined by retired nurse Mely Gatan-Buyagawan and retired teachers Rose Bermudez and Paz Susuki.

A recent addition is a 26-year-old daughter of one of the volunteers "who grew fond of what we do," Lo said.

De la Rosa now guides every performance as the group tours the city this Christmas.



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RP in world freedom poll: From free to partly free

From page A1

119 to 122 this year, a new record as freedom made inroads in the Middle East and Africa.

"These global findings are encouraging," said Arch Puddington, director of research at the organization.

"Among other things, the past year has been notable for terrorist violence, ethnic cleansing, civil conflict, catastrophic natural disasters, and geopolitical polarization," he added. "That freedom could thrive in this environment is impressive."

Downgrade

Disheartening, however, is the ratings downgrade on the Philippines, reputed to be the most vibrant democracy in Asia.

According to the Freedom House report, the decision to downgrade the Philippines to "partly free" from "free" was based on allegations of electoral fraud, corruption and government intimidation of opposition members that were found to be "credible."

The report explained that ratings reflected global events from Dec. 1, 2004 to Nov. 30, 2005.

In the Philippines, this period was marked with allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo had conspired with ex-Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in rigging the 2004 presidential election. Both officials have denied the charge.

The same period also saw the killing of journalists and leftist leaders in the countryside as well as international surveys showing a worsening of corruption in the country.

The downgrade puts the Philippines in the same league as Afghanistan, Singapore, Thailand and other "partly free" countries.

New democracies

The three additions to the list of electoral democracies were the African nations of Burundi, Liberia and the Central African Republic. The three countries afforded considerable space for political opposition and met the minimum standard of a fair vote count, the report said.

But the most significant improvements were noted in the Middle East, where Lebanon was upgraded from "not free" to "partly free," despite a series of political killings that shook the country. The Lebanese witnessed major improvements in both political rights and civil liberties following the withdrawal of Syrian troops based in the country, the report said.

The report also noted elections held in Iraq, Egypt and the Palestinian territories, the introduction of women's suffrage in Kuwait, and improvements in Saudi Arabia's media environment among other encouraging signs in the region.

"This emerging trend reminds us that men and women in this region share the universal desire to live in free societies," commented Thomas Melia, acting executive director of Freedom House.

In a rare criticism of the United States, the survey complained about what it called "the widespread use of sophisticated forms of gerrymandering," or redrawing of electoral districts, that the authors said has "reduced competitiveness in congressional and state legislative elections."

Just last week, the US Supreme Court agreed to hear a case dealing with redistricting in the state of Texas engineered by former House Republican Majority Leader Tom DeLay that allowed Republicans to pick up six more seats in the House of Representatives in the 2004 elections.

89 countries free

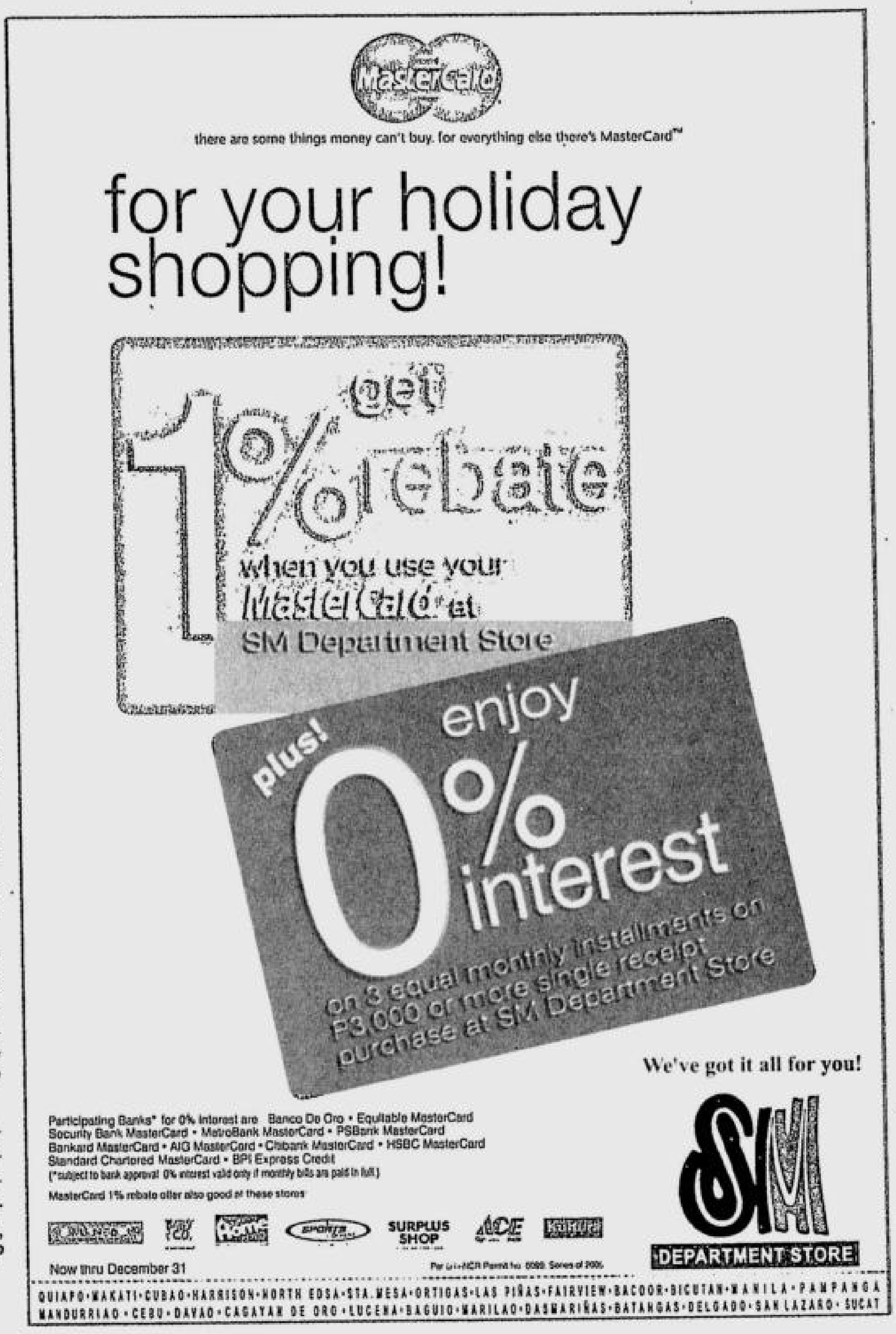
Several European countries, including France, faced challenges to their democratic institutions stemming from their failure to effectively integrate non-European immigrants, the report said.

Freedom House listed 89 countries as "free," meaning that 46 percent of the world's population now enjoyed a climate of respect for civil liberties.

Another 58 countries were judged "partly free," while the number of countries considered "not free" declined from 49 in 2004 to 45 this year, the lowest number in over a decade.

Ukraine and Indonesia saw their ratings go up from "partly free" to "free" while Afghanistan, which inaugurated its new parliament on Monday, moved from "not free" to "partly free." Also rising to the "partly free" ranking was Kyrgyzstan.

Eight states in the "not free" category received the survey's lowest rating for political rights and civil liberties—Cuba, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Libya, Syria, Sudan and Burma. *AFP*



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Believe it not, BIR makes it . . .

From page A1

Presidential Anti-Graft Commission's "honor and horror rolls."

The BIR was one of the top five agencies that made the PAGC "honor roll" announced yesterday by its chair, Constancia de Guzman.

The others were the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Science and Technology and the Office of the President, said De Guzman.

These five agencies passed with flying colors their implementation of 22 anticorruption measures under the PAGC's Integrity Development Action Plan, she said.

The measures, taken up in a workshop last year, were designed to prevent and deter corruption in the workplace, and educate employees and form strategic partnerships with other agencies. They include the creation of internal mechanisms that would audit employees, receive complaints and investigate cases brought against them.

The top five on the "horror roll" were the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Immigration.

42 agencies monitored

De Guzman said these agencies were requested to submit monthly accomplishment reports on how they were implementing integrity-boosting measures.

She said that her commission was monitoring 42 agencies, but only the top five agencies on the honor and horror lists were disclosed.

De Guzman also said that since she took over as PAGC chair in August 2004, the commission had handled 158 cases of allegations of corruption against officials in 27 agencies.

The DPWH topped the list in the number of complaints filed with 35 cases. Trailing were the Department of Education (28), BIR (15), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (13) and the Philippine National Police (9).

Of these cases, 13 are pending before the Court of Appeals, four were before the Supreme Court.

De Guzman declined to name the officials because cases were still pending.

Headway in campaign

Tony Kwok, the Hong Kong-based anticorruption expert hired by President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday lamented the failure of officials to communicate to the public the progress which he said the government was making in its efforts to fight corruption in the bureaucracy.

In a meeting with the President and her Cabinet, and later with reporters, Kwok underscored the importance of communicating this achievement to local and international communities, especially because of the tendency of the Philippines to land in surveys of the most corrupt countries.

Kwok dismissed these polls, saying these were "not scientific" but rather "perception surveys."

That's why, he told reporters, the media should report "the good things that the government has done in fighting corruption" so that the people would appreciate its efforts.

For example, Kwok said that in the past two years the Office of the Ombudsman had been able to improve its investigative credibility and conviction rate of erring officials.

Ombudsman strengthened

The office also has strengthened its investigative force. From 37 investigators, it now has 100 and there would be an additional 100 next year. He said the Ombudsman's budget had doubled over the past two years.

From a "terrible" 14-percent conviction rate two years ago, the Ombudsman has improved its record to 47 percent, said Kwok.

Kwok also noted the Ombudsman's achievement in causing the dismissals of senior government officials. He couldn't remember the figure but said it "actually exceeded the total number of dismissals the Ombudsman has made in the last 16 years."

Fair coverage, please

"So I'm going to be fair that in this country from the outside point of view, the Philippines has a corruption problem. But I am also convinced—and I have been here for two years—a lot of progress has been made by the Office of the Ombudsman," he said.

Kwok added that this should be given a fair coverage by the media.

He reiterated that the Philippines could wipe out corruption in two years if the government continued to put in resources and implemented its anticorruption programs.

Pessimism

Asked how the negative perception of the Philippines could be erased, he noted that the biggest enemy in fighting corruption was "the people's pessimism" and the perception that this was something that they would have to live with.

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Bush vows to continue controversial spy program

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush said on Monday he broke no laws in authorizing spying on Americans with suspected ties to terrorism and declared he would continue the practice despite concern that it infringes on civil liberties.

BUSH

Bush, facing a barrage of questions over the program at an end-of-year news conference, said he believed an investigation was under way by the Justice Department into who committed the "shameful act" of revealing the covert program to the press.

He rejected any suggestion he was exercising "unchecked power" when he decided after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks to authorize eavesdropping on international telephone calls by Americans with suspected links to terrorism.

"Do I have the legal authority to do this? And the answer is, absolutely," said Bush, who is struggling with low approval ratings and wide public discontent with the Iraq war.

Bush's approval rating rose eight percentage points to 47 percent, their highest level since March, in an ABC News/Washington Post poll released on Monday. The poll, taken in the past week, follows a series of speeches Bush began late last month to bolster waning public support for the war in Iraq.

"I've reauthorized this program more than 30 times since the September the 11th attacks, and I intend to do so for so long as the nation faces the continuing threat of an enemy that wants to kill our American citizens," he said.

Bush also said it was "inexcusable" that a group of US senators were blocking renewal of the Patriot Act, a centerpiece of his war on terrorism which includes provisions critics also say infringe on Americans' individual liberties.

Bush said the eavesdropping program, first disclosed by the New York Times on Friday, had been effective in disrupting terrorist acts, but he gave no details.

Several Republican and Democratic lawmakers back plans by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, to hold a hearing on the issue. Many question whether spying on Americans violates the Constitution.

West Virginia Democratic Sen. John Rockefeller, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said on Monday he had expressed serious concerns about the program after he first learned about it in July 2003. In a hand-written letter to Vice President Dick Cheney, Rockefeller wrote that the activities raised "profound oversight issues."

Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada and his predecessor, Tom Daschle, said they were briefed by the administration about the program but said key details were omitted.

Reuters

Former top Saddam officials freed

BAGHDAD—THE US MILITARY has released dozens of high-level detainees from the ousted regime of Saddam Hussein, including two female weapons scientists nicknamed "Mrs Anthrax" and "Dr Germ", it was revealed on Monday.

US military spokesperson Lt. Col. Barry Johnson said eight former high-value detainees, whom he declined to name, had been released.

"Many were originally held as suspects in possible war crimes and as material witnesses" in cases against the regime, he said.

"They no longer were deemed to have information in this regard," he said, adding that they were released Saturday.

An Iraqi lawyer said a total of 24 former senior Saddam officials had recently been released, including Huda Saleh Mahdi Amash, known as "Mrs Anthrax", and Rihab Taha, "Dr Germ."

"It was a decision taken on Dec. 4," he said on condition of anonymity, adding that a number of them had received passports to leave the country.

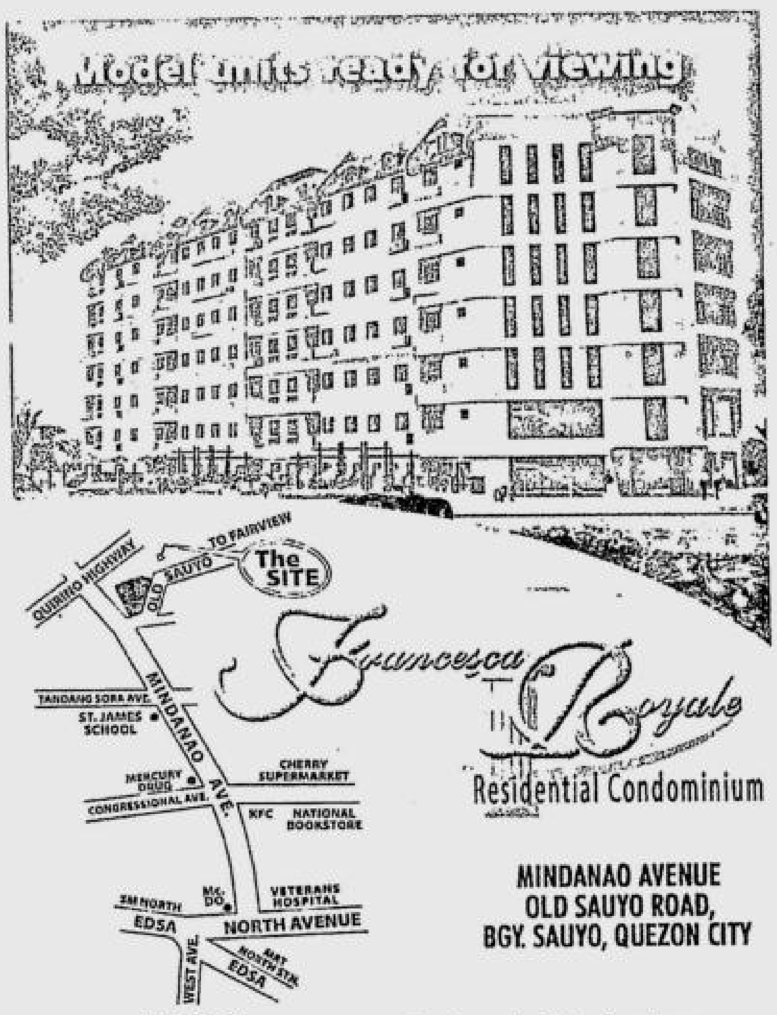
Amash was ranked 53rd on the US-led coalition's list of most wanted officials and was arrested in May 2003 for her work in the regime's biologicial warfare program.

Taha holds a PhD in microbiology from a British university and was the director of an institute where scientists were carrying out research on anthrax and a bioterrorist agent based on botulism toxins.

The two were high ranking Baath party members and the only women in US hands.

Reports had swirled around on Sunday about the release of several top figures from the old regime as part of a deal to appease the disaffected Sunni Arab minority in the aftermath of elections—a deal the lawyer confirmed.

AFP



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First Afghan parliament in decades sworn in

KABUL—FORMER WARLORDS, ex-communists, Taliban defectors and women activists were sworn in on Monday as members of the first Afghan parliament in more than 30 years amid hopes of national reconciliation after decades of bloodshed.

The inauguration was peaceful despite threats by Taliban guerrillas and was greeted with tears of emotion, although there is disappointment that many in the parliament are accused of serious rights abuses and links to the drugs trade.

"This meeting is a sign of us regaining our honor," President Hamid Karzai said after swearing in the 351 lower and upper house members.

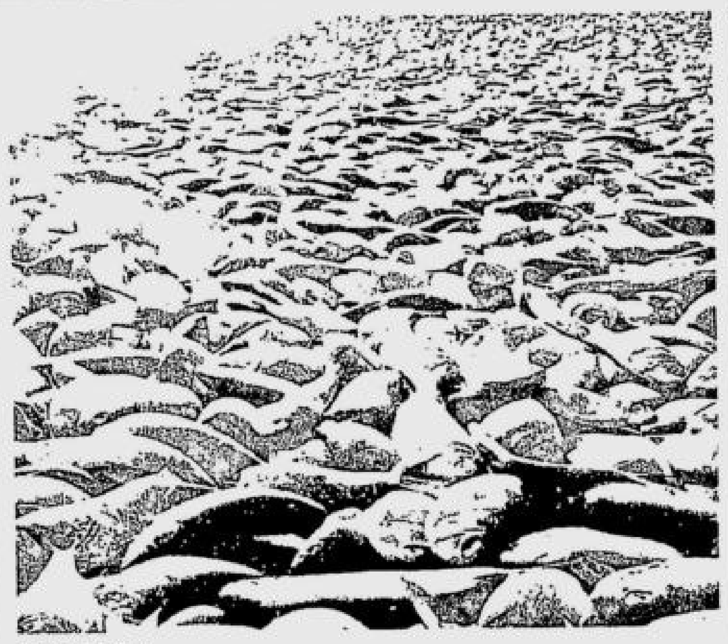
"This homeland will exist for ever!" he declared, prompting tears from many delegates.

Karzai urged national reconciliation after almost three decades of warfare and reiterated a call to the Taliban to abandon their insurgency, which has intensified in the past year despite his efforts to encourage defections.

Parliament has to endorse Karzai's ministers, and government officials said after the inauguration he was considering reshuffling his cabinet and cutting the number of ministries.

The officials, speaking anonymously, said the reshuffle would affect at least two ministries, including foreign affairs. Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak confirmed the plan: "Yes, there will be some changes," he said, but gave no details.

Reuters


FISH KILL
Thousands of dead Menhaden fish are seen on the beach Dec. 19 in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. AFP

Nauru isolated; only plane repossessed

WELLINGTON—THE TINY AND impoverished South Pacific state of Nauru appealed to the United States on Tuesday to release a repossessed plane which provided the only links between the island and the rest of the world.

"The repossession of the plane has put lives at risk as the health of many families in Nauru depends on travel to Australia for medical emergencies," Transport Minister Kieren Keke said in a statement.

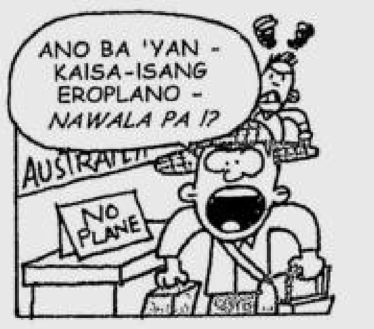
"All flights have been canceled and thousands of booked travelers are stranded," he said, adding many Nauruans were trying to return to the island for Christmas.

Government-owned Air Nauru lost its only plane, a Boeing 737-400, on Sunday when it was repossessed by Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank of the United States, the US government's export credit agency.

An Australian court upheld the bank's move after Nauru failed to make many of the repayments due since 2002 as the finances of the island, formerly one of the richest nations per capita in the world, fell into disarray.

Nauru wants the Ex-Im Bank to lease the plane to Air Nauru until a buyer is found and the airline can find an alternative aircraft.

"Ex-Im Bank would gain revenue whilst seeking interested buyers for the aircraft and Air Nauru would be able to continue providing essential air services to the people of islands that have no alternate air services," Keke said.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The 7,500 residents of Nauru, a 21 sq km coral atoll lying near the equator, were once among the world's wealthiest due to the export of phosphates, most of which came from fossilized bird droppings.

But the reserves are almost exhausted and with earlier wealth squandered through corruption and mismanagement, the country is virtually bankrupt.

AFP

South Korea to probe stem cell research

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREAN INVESTIGATORS said Tuesday they would soon conduct DNA analysis of frozen patient-specific stem cells allegedly created by cloning pioneer Hwang Woo-suk, who is accused of faking parts of his groundbreaking research.

A committee of nine scientists has questioned Hwang during its probe. "We will be able to conduct DNA analysis of frozen stem cells in two or three days," it said in a statement.

The committee confiscated all computers containing research data from Hwang's laboratory Monday after sealing off the lab.

Experts say it will take less than a day through DNA analysis to determine whether the stem cells exist or not.

Hwang was lionized as a national hero in South Korea until critics publicly accused him of fabricating key parts of his research into the production of patient-specific stem cells.

Hwang maintains that his research is essentially sound but has asked the US journal Science to retract his research paper due to "irretrievable mistakes in the photography" that accompanied it.

AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Spain arrests 16 suspected militants

MADRID—Spanish police arrested 16 people on Monday who are suspected of recruiting al-Qaida fighters to send to Iraq, officials said. The group's alleged leader, a 25-year-old Iraqi known as Abu Sufian, had access to al-Qaida's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and probably sent his recruits on suicide missions, the interior ministry said. The 16, of several nationalities, sent volunteers to Iraq "to wage jihad (holy war) as members of the al-Qaida network," Spanish Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso told a news conference. *Reuters*

19 killed in US seaplane crash

MIAMI—Nineteen people were killed when a propeller engine seaplane plunged into the ocean just off the south Florida coast on Monday, officials said. The charter aircraft, which belonged to Chalk's Ocean Airways, crashed just offshore in shallow waters at the entrance to Biscayne Bay, which separates the cities of Miami and Miami Beach, soon after taking off Monday afternoon. Coast Guard divers plunged into the ocean at the site but were unable to rescue any survivors. The airplane, a 17-passenger Grumman G-73T Turbine Mallard, was upside-down under water and visible from the air. *AFP*

US contractor killed in Iraq

PARIS—A Sunni Arab extremist group close to al-Qaida on Monday broadcast an Internet videotape showing the killing of a man it said was an American contractor held hostage in Iraq, the first such killing of a Westerner in over a year. "As we promised, we broadcast a videotape of the killing of the American advisor (at the Ministry of Housing)," said a statement accompanying the videotape posted by the Islamic Army in Iraq, referring to US national Ronald Schulz. The videotape showed a blindfolded and handcuffed man on his knees being shot by a machine gun from behind. *AFP*

UK's first gay 'marriage'

BELFAST—Lesbian lovers Shannon Sickels and Grainne Close became the first gay couple to get "married" in the United Kingdom, sparking protests outside Belfast City Hall on Monday. To cheers and the strains of Dolly Parton's 1972 hit "Touch Your Woman," the pair took advantage of the brand new civil partnership law, which offers gay couples the same rights as heterosexual married couples. *AFP*

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DLI Carbocisteine susp. 100 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	29.00	87.25	58.25/bot
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Netanyahu succeeds Sharon as leader of Likud party

NETANYAHU REUTERS

JERUSALEM—FORmer premier and arch hawk Benjamin Netanyahu swept to victory Tuesday in the contest to succeed Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as leader of Israel's beleaguered right-wing Likud party.

The 56-year-old was formally declared the winner shortly after his closest challenger, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, conceded defeat.

Netanyahu pledged in his victory speech to lead the party, which has dominated Israeli politics for the last three decades but is facing possible meltdown at March's general election, back to power.

"I came here tonight to tell you that as of now, the Likud is beginning the march back to reclaim the leadership of the country," he told supporters at Likud's Tel Aviv headquarters in the early hours of Tuesday.

Netanyahu had been introduced onto the stage by the party's director-general Arik Brami with the words: "I congratulate the winner of the primaries."

Although the final official results were still to be declared, an exit poll had earlier given Netanyahu 47 percent of the votes against 32 percent for Shalom.

Ultra-nationalist candidate Moshe Feiglin won 15 percent while Agriculture Minister Israel Katz trailed in fourth place with six percent, the poll for public television showed.

Candidates needed to secure more than 40 percent of the vote to avoid the contest going into a second round.

Conceding defeat, Shalom told his supporters that he had no intention of jumping ship, adding: "I stand ready to serve the party."

The vote was held a day after Sharon, who dramatically resigned from Likud a month ago to form his own party, was admitted to hospital suffering from a mild stroke. Doctors expected the 77-year-old to be released and resume his duties on Tuesday.

The victory enables Netanyahu to take back the helm of the party which he led to victory in the 1996 general election before suffering a crushing defeat at the hands of the then Labour party leader Ehud Barak three years later.

Sharon quit Likud and announced the formation of a new centrist party called Kadima on Nov. 21, having grown fed up with trying to battle hardliners who refused to forgive him for pulling Israel out of the Gaza Strip. *AFP*

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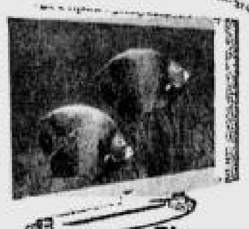

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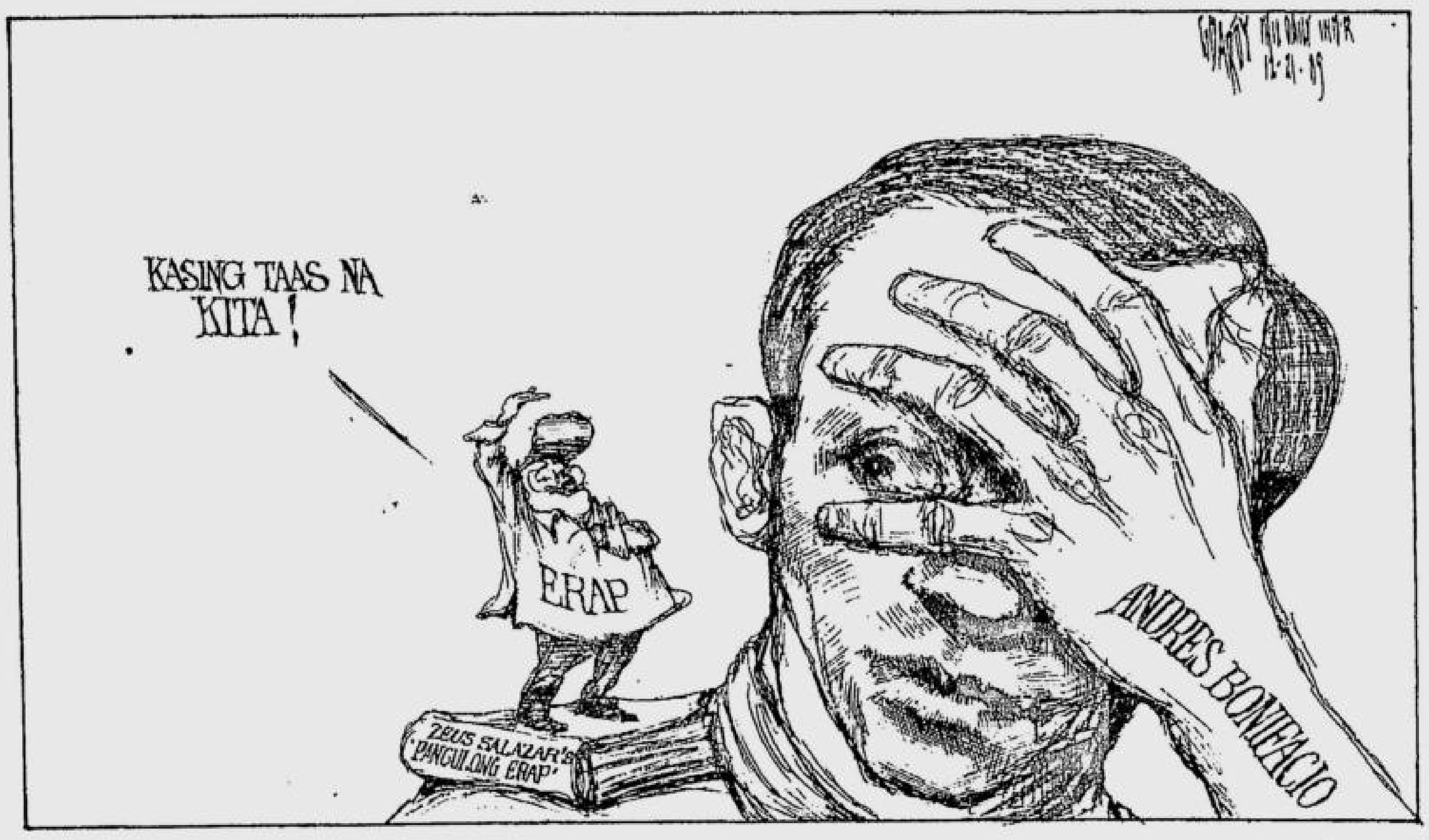


Stop running

NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK. THIS IS ALWAYS EXPECTED of the President of the Philippines. By this, we mean that whenever the old year begins to segue into the new, our perennially optimistic population expects President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop running for office and to appoint a credible Cabinet. As she approaches her fifth year in office, we have to wonder if the country isn't due for yet another disappointment.

EDITORIAL

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has only gone so far as to admit that "there will be a few announcements" concerning the Cabinet. As it is, the perennially leak-prone Palace has sprung the latest in Cabinet-related rumors. They are, to put it mildly, uninspiring. Most notable among the mentioned possible changes are Rene Velasco, old-time Arroyo factotum, replacing Rigoberto Tiglao at the Presidential Management Staff, and Michael Defensor being moved from natural resources to the position of presidential chief of staff. (There's no word on where Tomas Alcantara, one of the closest advisers of the President, will end up; there are rumors though that he's slated for the post of the executive secretary or will be made to focus on his concurrent position as head of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office.) Then there's talk of Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya going to the budget and management department—after he accomplishes his mission to steer the passage of the 2006 budget in the House.

But these are just some information tidbits amounting to no more than speculation, let loose either by aspirants hoping to firm up appointments, or by opponents of incumbents hoping to edge the latter out of their seats.

In contrast to the rumors, are hard facts. The President, after dangling some weeks ago that she was hell-bent on putting the government in some sort of "state of emergency" footing—to deliver services more speedily—has been silent on what, exactly, she plans for the coming year. The first, and most prominent face, of any new look would be her Cabinet. She seems to have run out of inspiring candidates.

The ability of a president to lead is measured not only by the incumbent's personal qualities, but also by the manner in which that chief executive is able to attract fresh or famous talents to her team. From day one of her presidency, Ms Arroyo's Cabinet appointments have been underwhelming. The country was willing to cut her some slack in the first years of her presidency, but her colossal failure to put together an impressive Cabinet after the May 2004 elections has contributed to her present troubles. Since July, when the Cabinet saw an exodus of disillusioned members, the President has made a few reassuring appointments. Finance Secretary MargaritoTeves is one of them. However, she continues to be saddled with some of the most curious and outrageous Cabinet officials in living memory.

The Cabinet at present seems divided into three main factions: the appointees who owe their positions to their closeness to the President; those who owe their jobs to the President's husband; and those who supposedly are in their positions owing to former President Ramos' or Speaker Jose de Venecia's protection or clout. This picture is made the more glaring because of the absence of appointments made solely on merits, and without political considerations in mind.

As it is, the Cabinet has at present two crucial vacancies: in the Department of Social Welfare and Development; and in the Department of Education. These are crucial positions begging for qualified, non-political appointments. Both departments are tasked to attend to and focus on some of the most pressing, even desperate, needs of the country: e.g., social safety nets for the poor, and reinvigorating measures for our decaying educational system.

Of course, the President may not want to trumpet her new appointments because she has run out of people to appoint. Or it may just be that she has spectacular new appointments to announce. Surely, regardless of the current political crisis, there are still people of proven patriotism and integrity, willing to serve in the Cabinet.

The former scenario is less desirable than the latter. If indeed that is the situation, then the President has become a lame duck.

But if there are decent people she can appoint, but still she prefers to keep her current collection of oddballs, cranks, sycophants and time-servers, then she deserves to be a lame duck.

Despite criticisms, FG goes ahead with HK junket

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IN SPITE OF WIDESPREAD CRITICISMS against wasting precious dollars on an all-expense-paid junket to Hong Kong and Disneyland, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo went ahead and quietly left last Monday—minus the planned fanfare—with 209 of the athletes, plus some members of his family. Another group left a little later. There were so many of them they could not all be accommodated in one jetliner.

Aside from the plane fare, hotel, food, land and water transportation, tips and other sundry expenses, the athletes were each given at least $300 as pocket money. Now you have an idea how much foreign exchange went out of the Philippines for the junket, and how many overseas Filipino workers toiled long hours to send that much foreign exchange here.

We had suggested that instead of bringing them to Hong Kong, the First Gentleman take them on an extended tour of Philippine tourist spots; if the intention was to make them enjoy the rides of Disneyland, to take them to Enchanted Kingdom in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, which is just as good, if not better, than Disneyland. Thus, that money would be spent here, to be invested here, and make our economy grow instead of making Chinese and American capitalists rich. But his spokesman said the Hong Kong junket was a promise made to the athletes by the First Gentleman before the Southeast Asian Games and that he did not want to break his promise and be likened to his wife. And he was not spending government funds but private money, anyway.

But critics countered that it would still be Philippine dollars that would be wasted, dollars that could be put to better use or kept here, and help improve our balance-of-payments problem.

Besides, whatever happened to the government slogan to "See the Philippines first"?

The Department of Tourism is laboring mighty hard to attract tourists here, spending more of the people's money to advertise in London and other cities. *Sayang naman* all that *pagod* and expense if our own countrymen don't visit our own tourist spots and prefer those of other countries.

Besides, many of the medalists have signified that they preferred to get the cash awards promised them. A few have expressed fears that they were being taken on the junket because the cash awards would be delayed or, horrors, would not be paid to them at all. Still, others were reported to have said they would rather see the Philippines first.

Critics said that as First Gentleman, Mr. Arroyo should have set the example for his countrymen and should have visited the Philippines' tourist spots first. It does not speak well of his wife's administration that, just after coming home from an extended vacation in the United States, the First Gentleman had a chance to take some of his countrymen on a Philippine tour but instead he brought them to another country.

Is the country his wife is governing not to his liking? Is it not good enough for him? Can't he stand his wife's governance, too? Does he love Hong Kong more than the Philippines? Does he love things Chinese more than he loves things Filipino?

If Mr. Arroyo were not the First Gentleman, the junket that he led would not have attracted so much censure. But because he is the First Gentleman; he should be, like Caesar's wife, above reproach.

If some of the athletes want to go to Hong Kong, he could have just given them the cash and let them go on their own. That way they would not attract so much attention—and make a bad example to other Filipinos, as the First Gentleman did by leading the junket.

The First Family has already committed so many boo-boos you'd think its members have already exhausted their quota of boo-boos. But the boo-boos keep coming up with surprises.

But wouldn't it be a nice Christmas gift if the matriarch surprises us with her resignation?

* * *

Here is a little quiz: Who is "The Crystal Voice of Asia"?

Sheryn Regis? Wrong.

Marri Nallos? Correct.

Remember that, because claims and counterclaims in show biz, as well as advertisements and billboards could confuse you. You might be asked that question in a quiz show with a million-peso prize.

Here's another question: What's in a name?

Answer: Plenty, if you are in show biz. It could mean success or failure.

Thus, Nora Aunor is the "Superstar"; Sharon Cuneta the "Megastar"; Vilma Santos the "Star for All Seasons"; Pilita Corrales "Asia's Queen of Song"; and Regine Velasquez is "Asia's Songbird."

That is why Marri Nallos and Sheryn Regis are both claiming the title "The Crystal Voice of Asia." The quarrel has become so acrimonious that it might soon reach the courts. Nelia Lim, the talent manager of Nallos, has already hired the services of lawyer Felix Carao Jr., senior partner of the Saguisag, Carao and Associates law firm. Regis is a new talent of Star Records.

A look at the records of the Intellectual Property Office will show that the title belongs to Nallos. She is the only one with a pending application for the trademark "Marri Nallos, The Crystal Voice of Asia," filed on Sept. 2, 2005, according to the IPO. Regis has none.

This means that the claim of the Regis camp on TV talk shows that the title "The Crystal Voice of Asia" has been registered to Star Records is false. On the contrary, Nallos has been using that title for several years already, talent manager Lim said. Records, advertisements, posters and press releases from years back will easily prove that, she added.

A huge billboard advertising Regis contained that title until recently. When Lim complained that the title belongs to her singer, the billboard was removed. However, Regis is still using the title in her press releases, Lim said.

"If Regis doesn't stop using the title 'The Crystal Voice of Asia,' I will sue her and Star Records for damages," Lim warned.

Missing

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE ONE THING I MISS IS THE MUSIC. IN A strange sort of way, I miss my neighbor who used to play Christmas songs rather obtrusively—he was in the building in front of us and aimed the cheerful strains of Ray Conniff directly at the window near where I write—as early as September. He was my early warning device for Christmas, or for the "ber" months, someone who took the Filipino Christmas, the longest Christmas in the world, dutifully.

There's another neighbor who has been playing Christmas songs of the local variety, but only intermittently. I like the Ric Manrique- or Ruben Tagalog-type songs blaring out in their blissful vintage monaural quality, which I deem the aural equivalent of sepia photographs by Tropicana. Nostalgia hangs thick in the air you can pare it with a *balisong*. Not so much the Banda-Malabon-type barrio-fiesta Christmas songs of Nora Aunor et al. That one may guarantee sudden wakefulness particularly when played loudly in early morning, but it doesn't always guarantee good cheer or goodwill toward the world in the suddenly awake.

Indeed, in a strange sort of way, I even miss the Christmas songs that used to be played by the SM mall near us as early as October. I know it is a not-very-subtle merchant's ruse to separate fools from their money, but as separations go, it's a reasonably amicable one. Better a willing sucker than an unwilling one. There are worse ways to part with your money in this country, taxes being one of them. But this year, even the malls seem to have given up cajoling cheer and money from the bedraggled and penurious—might as well squeeze blood from stone—and have decided to wait for better times.

I grew up associating Christmas with songs. I did not grow up in a gift-giving environment, though I don't know if that was just our familial circumstances or those of the rest of the community. I do recall that we exchanged gifts in elementary school before we broke up for the holidays, the gifts being largely token ones, often of the Christmas-card variety made by own hands. I do recall as well that the more well-off among us gave gifts to the teachers, which from hindsight ought to have given me a glimpse of the world that lay ahead. But what I do recall most of all at that time of year was being surrounded by music.

The Christmas program was a hotly contested one, various classes vying to win the singing prize. The honors class in our parish school was the designated church choir, so my recollection of Christmas Past, through the haze of nostalgia, is aided in no small way by the haze I felt in my brain during the season while walking to church before the cock crowed to help proclaim the coming of the light of the world. Again, for a reason I could not fathom, they seemed to have equated brain with voice, academic predisposition with a musical one. I would learn much later that the opposite tended to be truer. I don't know that the experience taught me the romance of music, I do know it taught me a thing or two about the Romance languages. It was where I learned songs like "Nacio, Nacio Pastores" and "Adeste Fidelis."

Over the years, I fell intermittently in league with carolers. I can at least say with some conviction—though that may owe to the haze caused in my brain by too many hangovers, apart from nostalgia—that we sang more to give Christmas cheer to others than to receive Christmas gratuity for ourselves. That was the case even if the houses adjacent to the one being assailed by our mellifluous voices had a way of experiencing sudden blackouts. Mellifluous voices, particularly when accompanied by an expertly plucked guitar (my contribution), do not herald good tidings to Scrooge.

Certainly, I can say with some conviction that we sang less desultorily than the kids now in my neighborhood, whose repertoire is limited to one song, "*Sa maybahay ang aming bati*," followed by the furious ringing of the doorbell. Over the years, I've seen "*bahay*" expand imaginatively in inverse proportion to the length of that one song. The ragged swarm that raggedly swarms around cars at intersections sings, "*Sa may kotse ang aming bati*." On several occasions, I've seen passersby sang to, or accosted, in this way, though I don't know what is used in lieu of "*bahay*" and "*kotse*." I myself can offer suggestions. For those with partners: "*Sa may syota*." For pregnant mothers: "*Sa may* baby." For the prosperous-looking: "*Sa mayaman*." For those with startling physical assets—ah, but this is Christmas, I'll give the gift of political correctness. Generically, one can always sing, "*sa may buhay*," which has the virtue of alternately sounding as cheer and threat.

I miss the carols most of all, though I like some of the more contemporary Christmas songs like "Pasko Na, Sinta Ko." That last one is truly inspired and catches the wistful, fragile, ethereal spirit of Christmas. I've always liked Christmas better than New Year because it is more given to introspection, to pausing, to looking inward. New Year is more given to looking back at the world, to examining the external life, to surging forward. You need not be a Christian to appreciate Christmas, there is a universality and transcendence in it that appeals to everyone and transcends even religion. The one thing that has always slipped me into a Christmas trance is song.

I don't know if the paucity of Christmas songs this year is just a temporary affliction or a sign that the longest Christmas in the world is dying. But this is Christmas, a time of hope, and I'd like to think this is just the year the music took a break and not the year the music died. Who knows? As the line in the non-Christmas song "Send in the Clowns" says:

Maybe next year.

Economic 'fire wall' blunts turmoil

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE RESILIENCE OF THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY from the shocks of recurrent political turmoil has increasingly puzzled foreign academic observers who have been following closely the unpredictable turns of the country's political developments.

The Philippine puzzle is explored in a recent paper written by Dr. Hal Hill, the H.W. Arndt professor of Southeast Economies at the Australian National University. Professor Hill has written several studies on the Philippine economy, at times in collaboration with economists at the UP School of Economics. His provocative paper, titled "The Philippine Conundrum," raises the issue: "What ails the Philippines?" His views are neither doomsday nor sunshine analysis.

The paper asks, "Why does this country, with so much talent among its almost 90 million people, and such a promising beginning as an independent nation state almost 60 years ago, run into trouble so frequently?"

The study does not paper over the "very serious fiscal situation," that "resembles that of an economy in crisis rather than one...which has recorded positive growth almost continually for the past 12 years."

The paper recognizes the link between the economy and politics. It acknowledges that the Philippines bequeathed the term "cronyism ... an art perfected under the 20-year rule of Ferdinand Marcos."

Philippine per capita income was once ahead of almost all of East Asia, but is now below most of them, the paper says. On the political side, the Philippines has replaced Thailand as the country "where the possibility of military coups is a regular dinner party conversation."

The country's public debt problems are "daunting, and are crippling the public sector," says the paper. "In the lawless region to the west of Mindanao, the long-running insurgency continues unabated, with ever more desperate impacts on local communities' livelihood, and serious implications for peace and order in Southeast Asia."

Moving the focus to the current crisis, the paper says the "administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which came to power in controversial circumstances in 2001, promising so much, is totally preoccupied with surviving the so-called 'Hello Garci' affairs (in which the President is alleged to have interfered with the count during last year's presidential election). It is therefore difficult to see how her administration, with its accumulated political baggage, will be in a position to take the tough and politically unpopular decisions needed for economic recovery."

Turning to the fiscal crisis, the paper points out that about 40 percent of revenue goes on interest payments, and a further 30 percent on salaries. With the effect that the government "has very little room to move, and key public services remain chronically under-funded...The problem is that, with its anemic revenue effort, the government has become highly expert at continually compressing expenditure, at the cost of long-term development needs."

"The country spends about half the East Asian average (as a percent of gross domestic product) on infrastructure," the paper points out. "Political uncertainty also deters potential private sector providers, who have deep pockets but require long-term predictability."

On balance, "notwithstanding all these problems, there is much that is positive about this country, which is poorly reported on and understood abroad," says the paper. "Its academic community is still the best in Southeast Asia outside Singapore. Its civil society is noisy, but at its best world-class. It has some excellent think tanks. Its press is free and very good in parts.

"For all the imperfections, democracy is deep-rooted and it more or less works."

The outlook is not all gloom. Moreover, says the paper, "the economy is holding up quite well under the political strains. Perhaps, the long mooted 'fire wall' between economics and politics is beginning to emerge.

"The economy is growing at around 5.3 percent (it slowed to little over 4 percent in the last quarter), comparable to the ex-China East Asian average.

"Remittances from the 8 million or so Filipinos abroad are now estimated to be running at about $15 billion per year, the third highest in the developing world, and equivalent to almost half of the country's merchandise exports.

"The floating exchange rate regime, adopted in the wake of the Asian economic crisis (from which the Philippines escaped largely unscathed), is working well. It helps discipline political excess and, as the peso slides in response to political tensions, it results in a highly competitive Philippine economy.

(The rally of the peso, whose exchange rate relative to the US dollar has soared over the past three months despite the unabated political turbulence, has been claimed by the administration as an indicator of external confidence in its economic management, a claim scoffed at by its critics.)

The country "has now run a current account surplus for seven consecutive years, which is unprecedented in Philippine history," says the paper. "It reflects a combination of success and failure: positively, the conjunction of all the above factors combined with a reluctance on the part of international capital markets to lend to the country.

"The result is unlikely to experience a balance of payments crisis for the foreseeable future, unless there is a serious fiscal cum political crisis.

"Congress has finally agreed to pass some major tax reforms, which will avert the fiscal crisis, at least for the next couple of years."

(To be continued: The "two economies")

Christmas gifts and letters

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT MUST BE ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE GIFTS I have received, not just for this Christmas season, but in all my life. And it's unique not necessarily because of the item itself, but because of the giver.

The gift is a two-CD set of classic and contemporary Christmas songs, collected and reproduced by Datu Ibrahim "Toto" Pendatun Paglas III, former mayor of Datu Paglas, Maguindanao and a "mover and shaker" in the ARMM area. Yes, the giver of this excellent collection of beloved Christmas carols and ditties, is a devout Muslim, and a political and business leader of the Muslim community. And his gift, while a welcome addition to any home music library, also bears a bigger message of religious and cultural understanding and acceptance.

"There is a notion that a Muslim 'does not celebrate Christmas,'" writes Datu Toto in an explanatory letter. "While not totally incorrect from the religious perspective of others, it is my personal belief that a Muslim may join Christendom in celebrating the Spirit of the Yuletide Season, the spirit of caring and giving, of hope, of reflection, of love for fellowmen, of nostalgic childhood memories, of godparents, very much a part of local cultures and traditions of humanity throughout the world. I recall that during my much younger days, my dear mother would even join her Christian teacher and friends in my birth town of Buluan, Maguindanao, as they carol around my village.

"Yes, a Muslim like me does share the happy spirit of the Season. I guess it is very much like the way certain non-Muslims join us in the celebration of our Holy Month of Ramadhan. Perhaps not many people know that even the American President, and the US Embassy in the Philippines—I am sure many other non-Muslims do the same—host Iftar dinners.

"And yes, in my view, Christmas Season is a fitting reminder that modern technology has already "shrunk" the world into ONE global village, and humanity into ONE global family. It is an occasion to show ourselves that we can be ONE in SHARING a very Special Season for all people on earth, for joy and love that should be free from differences of religion and/or creed."

And THANK YOU, Datu Toto, for giving our Christmas celebration a whole new other level of meaning!

* * *

AROUND this time of the year, we have also come to expect a letter from Fr. Ben Erkens, CICM, whom my husband and I met at the Tabuk Pastoral Center in Bulanao, Tabuk, Kalinga, some years back. Our meeting was made all the more memorable by an exchange of fire between warring clans while we were spending the night at the mission. I remember clearly that while we visitors were about ready to dive under the dining table, Father Ben remained calmly seated in his easy chair, reading a magazine, then strolling slowly to the balcony to check out the "action."

This year's letter, an update of Father Ben's activities, especially his scholarship and development programs, is different in that it bears news that Father Ben, who first came to the Philippines in 1955, will be returning to his home in Europe next year.

"This event is for me a reason to thank you now with Christmas for your generous and lasting support during my stay in the Philippines," writes Father Ben. "The missionary work included school and catechesis, parish work and social action (reforestation). There are still critics who object: What does it all matter in this crazy world? What is the use of it? Our firm answer is: Much more than you think! The grain dies and brings forth an abundant fruit: A farmer believes in the harvest. And so do all of us. We believe in the harvest to promote the happiness and well-being of every person. Then (to quote Mother Teresa) we meet the person of the Christ."

Thank you, too, Father Ben, for reminding us of the importance of faith and belief in the necessity of what we do—whatever it is we recognize as our mission on this earth. Have a safe trip home!

* * *

HAVE you ever wondered where the term "*pancit*" comes from? Or who is the Ongpin after whom the main street of Manila's Chinatown was named?

These and other questions about the Filipino-Chinese community and the contributions of the Chinese to our way of life are answered in the book "Tsinoy: The Story of the Chinese in Philippine Life."

Launched last Dec. 11 at Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center in Intramuros, this coffee-table book features over 400 photographs—some of them rare, most of them never before published—and 38 essays that trace the experience of the Chinese in the Philippines, the role they played and continue to play in our history and national development, including their role in the resistance to Spain, the Philippine Revolution of 1898 and the anti-American and anti-Japanese movements.

Packed with information that is the result of years of research and scholarship, the 268-page book also offers interesting trivia, like the origins of many words in contemporary lingo and the origin of many street names. It will surely make for an excellent gift not just for scholars, but for everyone curious about our complex history.

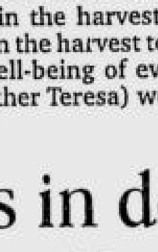
The impressive photo selection in "Tsinoy" is taken from the vast photographic collection of Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, an organization of Tsinoys that is involved in both scholarship and research as well as development and advocacy work. It is based in the Bahay Tsinoy, a Museum of the Chinese in Philippine Life, at the Kaisa Heritage Center in Intramuros which is hailed as one of the best museums in the country.

"Tsinoy" will be available at leading bookstores nationwide and at the Kaisa Heritage Center in Intramuros. E-mail Kaisa@philonline.com or call 526-6796 or 526-6798.

A reminder: buyers of "Tsinoy" will enjoy a P200-discount until Dec. 31 only, so hurry!

Christmas hopes in décors

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

ONE OF THE SIGNS OF TURF RIVALRY AND one-upmanship in Metro Manila can be seen along Roxas Boulevard at night. In a vain bid to outdo Manila's very popular Baywalk project, which is marked by very colorful and distinctive street lamps, Pasay has set up its own lamps—bigger, brighter, and with a corresponding dose of bad taste. These lamps are so closely set up that anyone with common sense will tell you that half of the lamps that line one side of Roxas Boulevard can be transferred to illuminate the other side of the street. It is obvious that common sense is not common in Pasay. At least, though, Roxas Boulevard will have a festive air all year. Since Roxas Boulevard is the route taken by most visitors from the two international airport terminals to Rizal Park, Manila and Pasay should coordinate to maintain a simple and unified design, to provide a good first impression of the capital and our country. Perhaps, the roads could be made wider, sidewalks paved and the traffic kept moving. They could also have more green and flowering plants on the center island and trees on the sidewalks. But then this kind of planning for this small but significant stretch of Roxas Boulevard has not happened since the time of Imelda Marcos.

Roxas Boulevard is cut by Vito Cruz (or if you want the new street name, Pablo Ocampo). The street lights let you know whether you're in Pasay or Manila. At this intersection are Christmas decorations that make a difference. Special lighting softened the severe white travertine façade of the Cultural Center of the Philippines to suggest a Christmas mood.

It is simple but effective. My only reservation is that the stars remind us of the flag of the United States of America. Across the street, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas maintains a Christmas lighting design that I look forward to each year. The 2005 design is quite striking because illuminated economic graphs are used as decoration. What is funny is that these graphs are not a record of our fair 2005 economic performance, but is the impossible wish for 2006. GNP goes sky high, inflation and interest rates plunge. We should encourage the officials of the finance and trade departments as well as the Neda and the Department of Budget and Management to look at this very innovative Christmas lighting design because it will surely cheer them up.

Businessmen should also go and see the BSP Christmas decoration so they won't be so glum about their business forecasts. Many people have been taking the pulse of the Christmas buying mood. Their reading: it is quite weak compared to the previous years'.

What should be a good economic indicator for us? One reason why I became a historian was that I did not want to be bothered by numbers. Math, science and economics were not for me, but sometimes I can't avoid them. Fortunately, there were other ways to learn economics. One lesson from my father is always to look at the price of a Big Mac whenever you are traveling and compare it with the price of the same Big Mac back home. The price of a Big Mac is a gauge of inflation and, in a sense, becomes a clear and tangible economic indicator, unlike GNP which simply remains graphs and figures to us. In the time of Cory Aquino, the indicator was GG or the price of *galunggong*. Today the indicator for most people is the price of gasoline, diesel or LPG.

Forced to listen to piped-in Christmas carols recently, I wondered about two things: First, how come we can't come up with new Christmas carols every year? All we have are the same old tunes since childhood. Second, why are Christmas carols stale and repetitive? Take, for instance, the "Drummer Boy" which repeats "parapapumpum" ad nauseam. Then we have the "12 Days of Christmas" with that catalog of multiple gifts for every day, each of which always ends with "a partridge in a pear tree." After seeing the BSP decoration, I decided to canvas the price of the gifts in the song to determine how much true love costs in 2005. A partridge or a pear tree are hard to find in Manila. Even the high-end shops like Rustan's and Santi's don't carry them. So I searched on Google and found out that an investment firm in the United States has been doing this every year for the last 21 years—developing the much awaited annual "PNC Christmas Price Index." The website comes complete with graphs and comparative and historical figures that make economics real to me. Frankly, if my math and economics teachers in school used the PNC Christmas Price Index, I would have enjoyed the lessons and appreciated numbers in my life.

This year a partridge costs $15 each and the pear tree $89.99; two turtle doves, $40; three French hens, $45; four calling birds, $399.96; five gold rings, $325; six geese-a-laying, $300; seven swans-a-swimming, $4,200; eight maids-a-milking, $41.20; nine ladies dancing, $4,576.14; 10 lords-a-leaping, $4,039.08; 11 pipers-piping, $2,053.20; 12 drummers drumming, $2,224.30.

The total index is $18,348.87. Now if you take the total costs of all the 364 repeating gifts, the amount would add up to $72,608.02. That's what true love costs if you give someone the gifts in the song. For those who want to buy the gifts on the Internet, the price goes up by $29,322.80 due to package, handling and delivery costs. All together that translates to millions of pesos. True love costs a great deal these days.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Healthy holidays

"THESE TASTE REALLY GOOD, THEY'RE NOT SWEET," THE vendor said in Filipino and then laughed at the irony of it all: "*Minatamis na hindi matamis* (sweets that aren't sweet)."

The vendor was trying to get me to buy native desserts as holiday gifts, sounding a bit like my doting aunts at Christmas parties: "Come, come, have some of the cake. It's not sweet at all."

All that tells us: Filipino tastes are changing, slowly but surely. Certainly, there's growing public awareness of problems involving too much sugar intake as well as other food items. The thought of these health risks sneaks into our minds more often during the holidays, and for good reason, given the way December's cheer is often dampened by news of a close friend or relative ending up in the hospital, or worse. Usually, it's a heart attack or stroke, but there are all kinds of holiday health risks.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Sweet, salty, fatty

Let's look at how we might reduce the risks to our health during the holidays, both for ourselves and for the people we invite over to our parties, or to whom we give gifts, some of which should be labeled "Danger," what with the rather unhealthy stuff inside.

We forget that until fairly recently, many holiday foods were really special treats reserved only for Christmas. When they were given for Christmas, the intention was to pace their consumption—it's not surprising so many of the traditional food gifts were meant to last several weeks, even months: ham, for example, and fruit cakes.

But times change and these days, we tend to pig out on the gifts, sometimes with disastrous consequences. We let our guard down during the holidays, even creating 21st-century magical mantras to offset the risks: "I'll start my diet again on Jan. 2" or, even worse, "I have my anti-cholesterol medicine with me anyway."

Alas, our bodies don't respond in such simplistic ways. If you binge on the crabs and lechon, you can't just pop an anti-cholesterol drug and get away with it. As for the post-holiday penance, we know that lasts a day or two before we go back to stuffing ourselves, even if less hedonistically than we did during the holidays.

My point is that the problems we have in December are often due to the accumulated "sins" of January to November. Many of the "special" Christmas foods have actually become daily fare. Just look at your office or school canteen. Even the lowest paid employees can now gorge on *lechon kawali* every other day.

Our consumption of processed and prepared foods has also increased. Such foods are murder, literally, when it comes to sugar and salt content and trans-fats. My regular readers know of my gripes against instant noodles because they're really not very nutritious and have too much salt.

Count in our lack of exercise and the stress of daily living and we're really conditioned for a catastrophic Christmas. The holiday season adds even more stressors and, let's face it, holiday over-eating is actually part of our response to the stress. Everything becomes comfort food, and the feasting becomes the tipping point. Hear the ambulance yet?

More than heart attacks

Now that I've mentioned the ambulance, I should clarify: The problems this season aren't just those of heart attacks and strokes among the elderly. This year I've been bringing my Yna to Christmas parties, and she's turned even more hyper than she usually is. I know partly it's from seeing so many people and taking in new sights and sounds, but the party food also plays a role. Be especially careful about the ice cream—kids become like the rabbit in the Duracell battery ads—just going on and on and on.

Be prepared for a whole range of emergencies, and learn to pinpoint where the problem started. If an elderly relative's blood pressure suddenly shoots up, don't rule out the salt in the diet—it can be anything, from the canned soup to the olives in the martini. There are also non-dietary factors to look at—smokers tend to increase the number of sticks during the holidays, endangering their own health as well as those of people around them.

That includes asthma attacks. My pulmonologist friends all agree the attacks become more frequent and severe this time of the year, blaming the cold and the pollution from holiday traffic, as well as indoor pollution from cigarette smoke.

Then there are those infernal fireworks—if you have a family member who has serious asthma problems, you might want to consider escaping to the countryside around Dec. 30 and coming back on Jan. 2 or 3. Besides the asthma attacks, we still have to face up to the terrible risks the fireworks pose for life and limb.

Safe gifts

Do your share by choosing healthy gifts. Think twice before giving candies to very young children (and, maybe, even the not so very young).

I'm amazed at how even non-smokers still give out cigarettes to friends who smoke.

I've dropped liquor as well, after hearing women complain about how their already difficult husbands become even more impossible with holiday drinking, turning violent at times.

Avoid processed foods as gifts because it's hard to figure out what have been put into them. The other day, I was silly enough to try a new chocolate powder product—it was absolutely vile, probably 90 percent sugar and 10 percent cocoa. Stick to traditional products like the *tablea*. I'd be careful there as well: ask for unsweetened ones. In fact, I'd just avoid processed beverages in general if they're sweetened, whether they're chocolate or fruit juices or even soya milk and tea. Beverages should be sweetened according to personal taste, so sugar has no place in these products.

Help create the health consciousness of restaurants and caterers by reminding them about dietary restrictions. Some of them are becoming conscious about new preferences, and are able to adjust, preparing anything from low-salt meals to vegetarian banquets.

Even as we try to change what "*masarap*" means through our holiday meals and gifts, we might want to reinvent what holiday cheer means, away from the stresses of noise and shopping. Think of alternatives. If you're in the city of Manila, bring the family over to Raha Sulayman park (in front of Malate church) tonight for a UP Singing Ambassadors concert. It starts at 6 p.m.

We need breaks from the holiday break itself: quiet evenings at home, or that escape out of town (no, not Hong Kong, please). Read through "Slow Food," a wonderful new book reminding us of the joys of preparing traditional Filipino food (minus the unhealthy ingredients). Most importantly, take time out to remind the young about the true spirit of the holidays, of the cheer and good health that come with the best gift of all: enduring friendships.

Black smoke taxes the Philippine economy

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADOPT urgent measures to curb air pollution in the country. For many reasons. Three air pollution-related illnesses—pneumonia, tuberculosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary ailments—are among the top 10 leading causes of mortality (22 million Filipinos are in various stages of tuberculosis.) Every year, an average of 2,000 Filipinos die and $1.5 billion goes up in smoke as lost wages and medical expenses because of air pollution, the World Bank says.

According to the World Health Organization, Manila skies are one of the most polluted in the world, surpassed only by Mexico City, Shanghai and New Delhi. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources claims that around 70 to 80 percent of air pollution in the country is caused by vehicle emissions. There are around 4 million registered vehicles and 5 million registered motorcycles in the country. The transportation department has reported that 70 percent of some 25,000 vehicles subjected to roadside checks every year fail the emission tests.

Factories and construction work contribute 20 to 30 percent of Manila's smog. Metro Manila's current level of total suspended particles is registered at 152 micrograms per cubic meter, higher than the standard of 90, although an improvement from last year's high of 171.

We need no modern technology to measure the air pollution hounding our people. We can see with our bare eyes the black smoke emitted by vehicles. The government must exercise political will to protect the right of every citizen to clean air.

—REP. FRANCIS L. NEPOMUCENO,
first district, Pampanga

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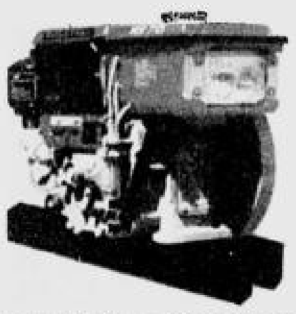

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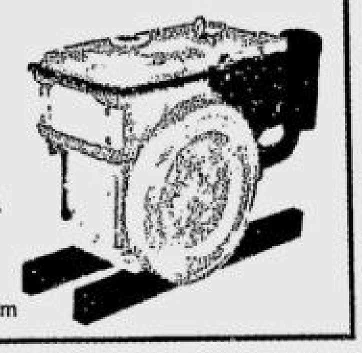

Why not work as expected of Juan de la Cruz?

WHY NOT CONSTRUCT MORE bridges across the Pasig River in order to alleviate the chaotic traffic situation in Metro Manila?

Why not put a stop to the installation of billboards which proclaim most proudly that such and such project is made possible through the efforts of public official so and so? (The people know very well that it is their money that is being spent on such projects.)

Why not put a stop to the creation of more and more provinces as we have already 79 at present? (Indonesia, an archipelago just like the Philippines, whose land area is more than six times larger than our country, has only 27 provinces.)

Why not require congressmen and senators to work Mondays through Saturdays, 12 months a year (just like Juan de la Cruz) so that the proposed national budget for the coming year can be acted with dispatch?

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court,
Malanday, Marikina City

AFP should review its contracts

MAY WE RESPECTFULLY SUGGEST that Lt. Gen. Generoso S. Senga, in his capacity as chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, probe AFP contracts in which Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia (ret.) figured, especially as AFP comptroller.

A review of these contracts—perfected, implemented or pending—may help unravel how Garcia might have amassed his ill-gotten wealth.

A court martial found him guilty of falsely declaring his true assets for the years 2002 and 2005 in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities. Some P14 million was found undeclared in his accounts in the AFP Savings and Loans Association Inc. and in the Land Bank. The Ombudsman has filed plunder charges against Garcia for unexplained wealth worth more than P300 million.

Clarita Garcia, wife of General Garcia, in an attempt to recover the $100,000 in cash that was seized from her son Juan Paulo Garcia at a US airport, stated in a sworn statement sent to the US Customs that (we are quoting her verbatim):

"I often travel with my husband on business and my travel, expenses and shopping money in excess of US$10,000 to $20,000 is provided to me. He also receives cash for travel and expenses from the businesses that are awarded contracts for military hardware. These businesses are in Europe and Asia. He also receives gifts and gratitude money from several Philippine companies that are awarded military contracts to build roads, bridges and military housing....

"Once the bids are approved and the review committee has checked out the companies, my husband is the final signature for funding the contracts. The expense money, gratitude money and shopping money is not declared as income...My husband's position in the Armed Forces is one of privilege. The gratitude monies that he receives is common and unsolicited. Contracted companies and personnel from the different branches of the armed services are grateful for my husband's assistance and timely payments for contracted work."

A review of the contracts involving Garcia may lead us to discover who are these favorite contractors who showed their gratitude to Garcia by giving him thousands of dollars or millions of pesos. A deeper examination of the contracts may reveal if the contracts are overpriced or suffer from any other irregularities.

Unless these contracts are revisited and given a second look, the AFP and, consequently, our impoverished people will once again be victims of abuses in the awarding of government contracts.

Senga's prompt and favorable action on this modest suggestion will help restore our people's faith in our military and will serve as a model for other civilian institutions to emulate.

—LEONARD DE VERA,
head, IBP Observers Panel
of the Gen. Garcia Court Martial,
DANTE JIMENEZ, founding chair,
Volunteers Against Crime and
Corruption, Makati City

What GMA did not tell us

BEFORE WE GET TAKEN IN BY Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's braggadoccio on VAT ("I told you so," PDI, 11/13/05), let us not forget the basic facts about this tax system:

VAT is a consumption tax. Because it is, anyone who buys or consumes VATable goods and services are taxed accordingly with a uniform 10 percent (for now) rate regardless of his/her status in life.

At the congressional deliberations, the new VAT law and other tax measures were presented as "pain package" both by the government and professors of economics. Their imposition, according to them, was necessary to solve the deepening fiscal problems of the country.

Now, where do the fundamental flaws of GMA's assertion that VAT has given the country the new economic momentum lie?

In her claim that VAT has made the peso stronger, resulting in the lowering of the prices of petroleum products.

In her claim debunking the "doomsayers'" assertion that VAT would eventually lead to price increases.

In her claim that President Bush listened to her appeal for the United States to use its oil reserves to blunt the soaring global oil prices.

To score some *pogi* points, GMA has once again exhibited her wit not as a seasoned economist but as a consummate politician. She presented only half of the picture on why the peso is appreciating and the prices of oil are going down. Then she used this as a trick to douse cold water on labor's growing demand for a legislated wage increase.

What GMA did not bother to tell us are the following facts:

1. The peso is appreciating against the dollar because of the heavy influx of OFW remittances. Aside from that, the US dollar has weakened significantly versus the euro and other currencies worldwide since last year. The question that should be asked is why, despite this development, did the Philippine peso remain weak, compared to other Asian currencies?

2. The prices of petroleum products have already increased by an average of P3 a liter since Nov. 1 due to VAT. VAT has nothing to do with the lowering of prices of oil, which was mainly dictated by the world market. In fact, whatever the current world prices of oil are, they will be 10 percent higher in the Philippines because of VAT.

3. Aside from petroleum products, VAT will also be imposed on power, seafares, airfares, toll fees and professional services.

The claim that it was her appeal that made President Bush use his country's oil reserves is another big lie. The truth is that the United States was forced to use its reserves when it was hit by a series of hurricanes and when the Opec decided to increase its oil production based on the increasing demand.

Anyway, with her claimed persuasive power over the US president, we challenge her now to make an even stronger demand for the surrender of the six GIs accused of raping a Filipina in Subic.

—WILSON FORTALEZA,
president, Sanlakas,
vice president, Freedom from
Debt Coalition,
wmfortaleza@yahoo.com

An actuation beyond belief

WE WRITE TO CORRECT WHATever misimpressions may have been generated by the letter of Ricardo M. Lacson. (PDI, 11/25/05)

For the record, Lacson has absolutely no authority to represent or speak on behalf of the Eagle HS '55 Foundation Inc. He is not an officer of the foundation.

Lacson's claim—that the reading by Sen. Jinggoy Estrada of President Estrada's "Ateneo did not teach me to lie, cheat and steal" speech "marred" the musical performance of Ateneo HS '55 held last Nov. 15 at the Meralco Theatre, and that it even allegedly caused "dozens" (including Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. of Ateneo) to walk out—is farthest from the truth. Father Bernas has issued a disclaimer—belying his alleged walkout—which saw print in the Nov. 29 issue of the INQUIRER. The musical performance itself was, by and large, well received and appreciated by many.

Finally, the claim of Lacson that, except for three or four people, the great majority of the foundation's members, including the 30 performers, did not know about or were caught flatfooted by the reading of President Estrada's speech is simply without factual basis.

The majority of the members of the foundation, especially the performers, were aware of the expected participation of President Estrada in the musical event. He was expected to sing and give a message. This was the subject of lengthy discussions during the special rehearsal of the performers held at the Tanay residence of President Estrada last Oct. 28. Lacson was even present in said rehearsal.

Considering that he was among us at the cast party hosted by Senators Loi and Jinggoy Estrada at Polk Street after the concert, his action is simply beyond belief.

—ANTONIO A. LOPA,
president,
Ateneo Eagle HS '55
Foundation Inc.

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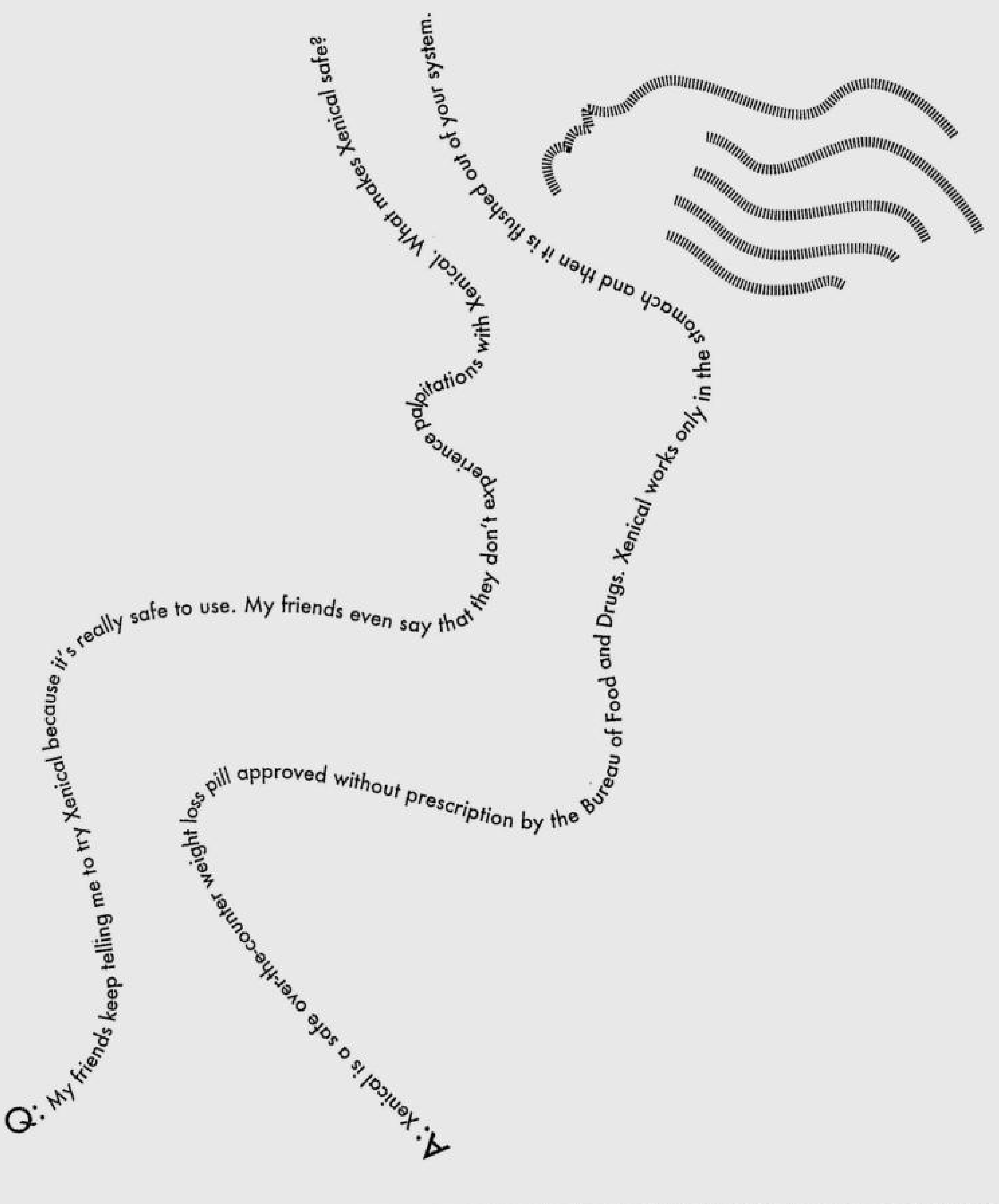

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Guns alter tribal peace process

By Vincent Cabreza
Baguio City

TRIBAL WARS AND PEACE pacts among Cordillera tribes continue to puzzle church officials, judges and law enforcers who have tried to resolve the conflicts.

A recent study by a University of the Philippines anthropologist, however, suggests that unending tribal disputes in the northern villages could just as well be blamed on their weapons.

The introduction of guns may have ruptured the ritual processes used to end the hostilities because bullets made reprisals too impersonal, said Dr. June Prill-Brett of the University of the Philippines Baguio.

She defined tribal warfare as "an armed conflict that involves citizens of a whole village against another armed force of a neighboring village."

In the original world-view of the Igorot, tribal conflicts are a means to assert community ascendance and, in the end, a way to attain lasting peace among clusters of villages, according to Brett and other indigenous peoples studies.

According to Tebtebba Inc., a Baguio City-based indigenous rights group, warring villages approach conflicts from a position of strength and communal justice.

Today, guns have altered this equation because these make conflict a battle of might, Brett said in her study titled "Tribal Warfare, Customary Law and Legal Pluralism in the Cordillera."

Might is right

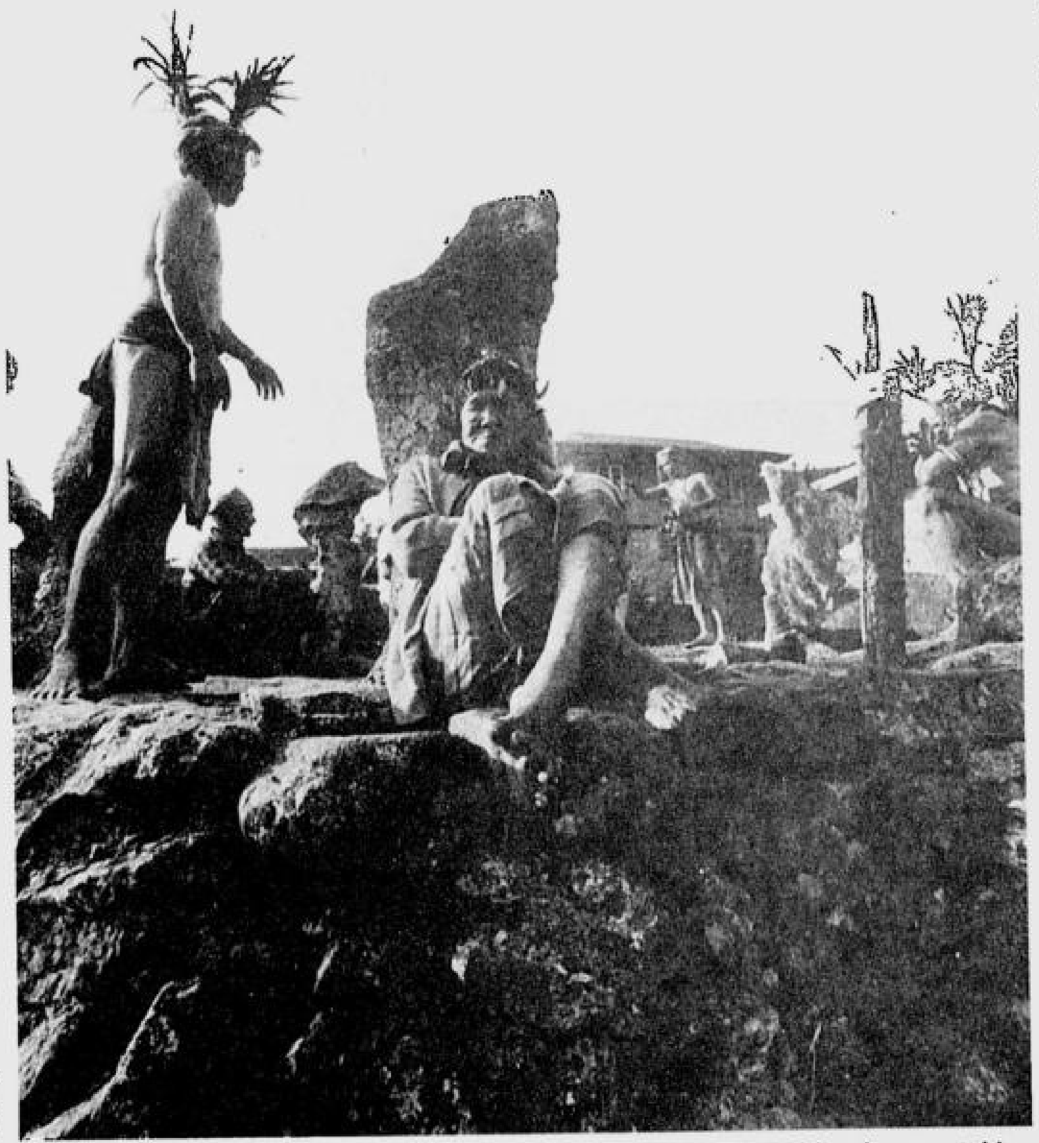
Brett said the number of enemy villagers, which a vengeful tribe can now kill with guns, can multiply faster than the ritual processes necessary to resolve them.

"[Nowadays] might means right," she said.

In 1997, a gun battle over a water source ran for days between tribes in Mt. Province. It ended because the poorer tribe could no longer replenish its supply of bullets. The boundary conflict that started the war has never been resolved.

Brett said anthropologists would need to cite figures to explain how tribal peace pacts have changed and why they no longer seem to work in an age where government-issued or smuggled firearms have replaced the spear during tribal battles.

Conventional courts may have already diluted indigenous processes for managing and resolving conflicts, she said. Courts, she said, afforded offenders a way out of ritual negotiations because they were allowed to settle, even when the offense also affected the community.



CORDILLERA photographer Tommy Hafalla was allowed by elders in 2004 to document this rare ritual in Sagada, Mt. Province, called "dangtey." The ritual was originally performed to summon their ancestors' spirits to protect them from neighboring tribes during ongoing tribal wars.

But offended parties have also been known to switch judicial processes immediately when verdicts do not suit them.

Brett documented cases where village members asserted tribal feuds to justify ordinary crimes to allow offenders to escape detention.

Many of the ongoing rifts reported by local newspapers refer to border wars, conflicts over water resources or unresolved crimes of several generations ago. However, the villages lack a figure of authority to validate these centuries-old offenses, Brett said.

This month, Zigzag Weekly, a Baguio newspaper, reported the predicament of a Kalinga policeman who shot a suspect and, consequently, has been besieged by protests from the suspect's village.

The report said the conflict threatened to blow up into a formal declaration of war unless the police commit to a "*bodong*" (peace pact).

Senior Supt. James Dogao, Kalinga police director, has refused to take that step because the peace pact may compromise future operations against criminals from the same village.

In November, the Mt. Province Polytechnic State College barred students from Kalinga from enrolling to avoid hostilities because their tribe members had been blamed for the killing of several Bontoc residents.

Bloodless penalty

The ban is considered a bloodless penalty, but Brett said it was a modern solution that produced new feuds because it was still "unjust."

Henry Aliten, an Apayao Isneg and an agrarian reform official, advocates the use of indigenous "*palnah*" (Apayao peace ritual) in his book "Palnah for Peace."

Aliten said contemporary courts were more concerned about punishment, while indigenous peace processes are mandated to address the roots of tribal conflicts.

But Bienvenido Tapang, a UP Baguio economics professor, noted evidence of an erosion of indigenous peace processes with the introduction of American political and economic institutions at the turn of the 20th century.

In his study, "The Ibaloi Cattle Enterprise of Benguet," Tapang said "the superimposition of American political rule and the market system on the traditional society may be summarized by investigating the collapse of the *baknang*'s (chieftain's) role in the political organization, the ritual and the economic system."

For example, Tapang cited ritual feasts during the 1920s and 1930s where politicians "not too subtly converted the occasion to generate votes."

Rule of engagement

At a lecture forum last week, Brett said tribal conflicts in the Cordillera used to be managed by civil rules of engagement.

Brett said villagers from Bontoc and Kalinga used to enforce "*baloknit*" or "*falocnit*," in cases of conflict, which requires the offended village to alert their enemies through a "*sudsud*" or a ritual declaration of war.

A "*pinakarsu*" (a villager who is married to a member of the enemy tribe) may call for a "*mamuchong*" (a definitive period of truce) at sunset, once actual combat takes place, she said.

Mayors and barangay chairs have since taken the place of the "*pinakarsu*," and the "*sudsud*" is no longer invoked when these government officials fail to stop bloodshed, Brett said.

But tribal wars remain "costly" exercises so they are often a village's last resort, she said.

War disrupts farming schedules, threatens local food security, compels villagers who have left their villages to study and work to return home and fight the community's battles, she said. *With reports from Ma. Rosario Alaon and Xaris Hope Tamayo*

BALWEG PDI PHOTO

Balweg's 'tribal war' gave birth to CAR

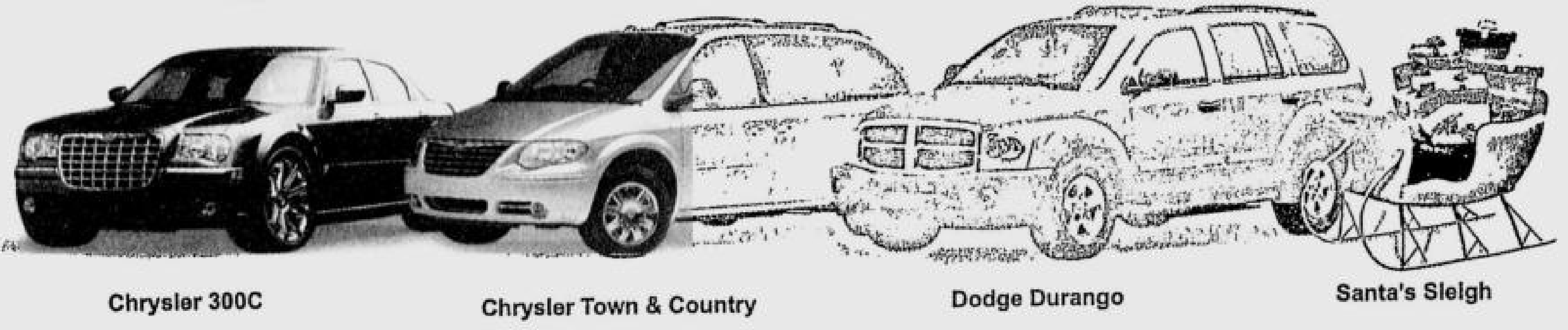
THE CORDILLERA Administrative Region owes its birth to a "tribal war" that was waged by former rebel priest Conrado Balweg and his militia, the Cordillera People's Liberation Army.

Ending that conflict in 1987 required then President Corazon Aquino to undergo a ritual *sipat* (cessation of hostilities) with Balweg, which obliged them to exchange tokens and to promote Cordillera autonomy.

But since Balweg's murder in 1999, the *sipat* has been rarely addressed.

When President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power in 2001, she interpreted the Balweg pact as a government commitment to employ the militia members as government troopers. *Vincent Cabreza*

DRIVEN



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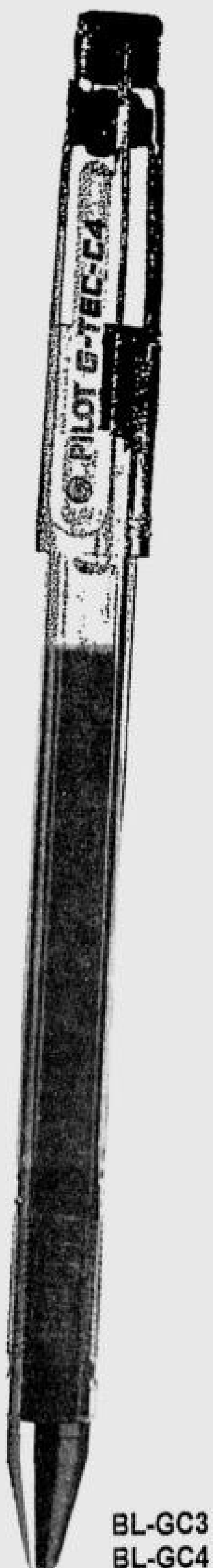

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Rebs kill 4 soldiers in Tagum market

DAVAO CITY—AT LEAST FOUR SOLDIERS, INCLUDing an Army captain, were gunned down by suspected members of the communist hit squad inside the Tagum City public market yesterday, the military said.

Col. Antonio Amodia, commander of the Army's 404th Infantry Brigade based in Maco, Compostela Valley, said the wife of one of the slain soldiers was wounded in the head and remains in critical condition.

He did not identify the injured civilian but said those killed were Capt. Marcelo Quitiquit, TSgt. Jobert Tagulimot, Pfc. Renante Santos and SSgt. Bernardo Evasco, all of the operational control unit of the 404th IB.

Amodia said the soldiers, their wives and children went to Tagum City to do Christmas shopping as the Noche Buena draws near.

He said they were about to board their service van when at least six suspects emerged and starting shooting using assault rifles.

Amodia said the soldiers were apparently caught off-guard because Tagum, which is about 60 km north of this city, is a peaceful city.

"They apparently were not able to return fire at the attackers," he said.

Amodia said based on reports reaching him, the suspects were in three motorcycles.

Amodia suspected that the NPA carried out the attack to force the government into declaring a Christmas ceasefire.

He said it might also be intended as a grand show because of the communist movement's founding anniversary this month.

As this developed, the military's Southern Command said it was not keen on recommending a truce because the NPA has a dismal record of honoring ceasefires in the past.

"There is no indication they would stop their attacks so we have no basis to recommend a ceasefire," Southcom chief Lt. General Edilberto Adan, said.

Continued clashes were used by the NDF as the main reason for its cancellation of the scheduled release of a captive Air Force major.

Jorge de los Reyes, National Democratic Front spokesperson in Central Luzon, said the planned release of Maj. Neptune Eliquin had been compromised by the series of killings of political activists and civilians carried out by the "death squads" of the military. Eliquin was abducted on July 2.

"Even a holiday ceasefire cannot transpire because of these brazen attacks," De los Reyes said in a statement.

He said the killings of Bayan Muna coordinator Jessie Alcantara in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, and Bayan Muna supporters Victorina Gomez and Romeo Atienza in Mexico, Pampanga, on Dec. 16 brought to 30 the number of victims of extra-judicial slayings in the region since September. *Dennis Jay Santos with a report from Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Water supply pact

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The city government of Puerto Princesa signed a memorandum of agreement with Water World Philippines Inc. (WWPI) to improve water quality in the city. Benefiting from the venture is Barangay Luzviminda, a southern rural village of the city.

WWPI president John Herrman said the project aims to provide a "sustainable small water supply system with a small amount" throughout the country in partnership with local government units. WWPI will construct and operate the project, which will be turned over to the local government after five years of operation. The city will appropriate P2.5 million as counterpart for the more than P5-million project. Construction starts in mid-February next year.

Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire truck driver kills 3

PAGADIAN CITY—At least three people were killed here while six others were injured when they were bumped by a fire truck on Saturday morning. The 12-year-old Daewoo fire truck of the local fire department was being driven by Senior Fire Officer 1 Juanito Madrid at about 9 a.m. for refueling when its brakes broke down, according to Pagadian Fire Chief Insp. Virginia Toledo. Madrid lost control of the vehicle, which eventually hit four vehicles near the public market before it pulled to a stop. Killed on the spot were tricycle driver Sonny Singidas, 42; Jesus Mendez, 71; and Reyna Riza Mañacap, who was on another tricycle. The other victims, including two children, suffered serious injuries and were being treated at a hospital.

Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3 inmates flee

BUTUAN CITY—Three prisoners bolted a police station detention cell here on Friday dawn. City police director Senior Supt. Ramon Espiritu said the prisoners escaped by cutting the steel bar on the roof of the main detention cell of the Northern Police Precinct in Barangay Langihan. He said the escapees, identified as Jomar Sevilla, 20; Akmad Maindi, 25 and Michael Savilga, were facing car theft and robbery charges.

Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Worker missing

BACOLOD CITY—An organizer of the militant National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) has been reported missing for more than two weeks. The family of Persues Geagoni, 42, told the police that he failed to come home in his residence in Talisay City, Negros Occidental last Dec. 5. Nieva Mabalena Geagoni, 40, said she last saw her husband boarding his motorcycle in the afternoon of Dec. 5 as he was on his way to the NFSW office on Libertad Street in the city. When he did not return home that night, she called him through his cellular phone but the calls were unanswered. She notified her husband's siblings and relatives to check on him at his office but he was not there. Persues' sister, Asela Murillo, said Perseus had earlier told her that two persons on board a motorcycle had been following him a week before he disappeared.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

2 killed in landslide

CEBU CITY—A couple digging for limestone in an abandoned quarry site were killed in a landslide on Dec. 12 in Barangay Kal-anan, Tabogon town here. Spouses Democrito Pelayo, 58, and Angeles, 45, both residents of Kal-anan, about 2 km from the town proper, were buried in about 10 tons of limestone and boulders shortly after 11 a.m. on Dec. 12. The couple's badly mangled bodies were dug up about four hours later with the help of a backhoe and grader from the municipal government, said Municipal Welfare Officer Sylvia Beduya. The couple had 11 children. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Poor tax collection

DUMAGUETE CITY—Municipal treasurers in Negros Oriental may lose the monthly financial assistance they have been getting from the provincial government due to the poor collection of real estate taxes. Provincial Treasurer Danilo Mendez said he planned to recommend to the governor's office to make tax collection efficiency as a basis for extending assistance to the treasurers. Mendez said the province started giving P500 monthly assistance to all 20 municipal treasurers in 2000 as an incentive, as the province also had a share in real estate taxes collected by the towns. Two years later, the amount was raised to P1,000. But Mendez noted that the collection last year and for the first three quarters this year were lower than the targets. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Rescuers find bodies of 3 more miners in coal tunnel

CEBU CITY—RESCUERS YESterday recovered the bodies of three of the six miners who were trapped for 10 days in the Ibalong Resources Development Corp. coal mine in Barangay Dumalan, Dalaguete, Cebu that collapsed Dec. 10 due to a methane gas explosion.

Rescuers were also able to locate the bodies of two of the remaining three miners but it would still be dangerous to get near them because of weakened tunnel support beams in the area were the bodies were, said Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Sesante.

The mayor said the members of the retrieval team had informed him that there was no chance of finding any of the remaining three miners alive, judging from the state of decomposition with which the bodies of those recovered yesterday were found.

Recovered at past 7 a.m. yesterday were the bodies of Nelson Villasis, 39, from Basay, Negros Oriental; Jaime Sanchez, 42, of Barangay Dumalan and Antonio Jose, 37, of Ablayan, Dalaguete.

Identities

Sesante said the three were identified by their relatives through the number in their headlights and their pieces of clothing because their bodies have already decomposed and their faces were hardly recognizable.

The remaining three miners who have yet to be recovered were Gregorio Amad, 35, of Ablayan, Dalaguete; Francisco Ybañez, 43 of Dumalan, Dalaguete and Manuel Lanogan, 45 of Canlawilao, Dalaguete.

Eight miners were on their way out of the 490-meter tunnel when an explosion occurred past 7 p.m. on Dec. 10. The explosion was caused by trapped methane gas, which exploded because of lack of ventilation or blower inside the tunnel.

Only two bodies—those of Boyet Geraldez, 25 of Inayagan, Naga, Cebu and Henrino Zuniega, 23, of Dumalan—were immediately recovered as they were closer to the entrance when the explosion occurred.

Taiwanese investor

The coal mine is operated by the Taiwanese-owned IRDC. Its location, Barangay Dumalan, is a mountain village 25 kilometers from the town proper. Dalaguete is 85 km south of Cebu City.

The tragedy came in the heels of another mining accident in Mt. Diwalwal in which dozens of miners were killed.

That accident was also caused by methane gas explosion that brought the tunnel in which the miners were working collapsing.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

MERCY SEEKER
A beggar appears to be standing near the center of a cross on a sidewalk in Baguio City. The holidays give hope to the poor, who turned to a life of begging, that people who have more would be generous enough to share.

Governors divided over ConCom proposal to scrap 2007 elections

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE COUNTRY'S GOVERnors are divided on the proposal of the Constitutional Commission (ConCom) to scrap the 2007 elections.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, president of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap), said he would call a meeting of the two groups for the governors to take a common stand on the proposal to scrap the 2007 elections.

One of the most vocal opponents of the proposal, Aumentado said, was La Union Gov. Victor Ortega while, on the other side, Camiguin Gov. Pedro Romualdo is strongly in favor of it.

"I want to get the collective stand of the governors and other local government officials instead of expressing my own view on the issue," he said.

He, however, said he was not optimistic on the proposal to suspend the elections because the ConCom's recommendation would be deliberated upon by both chambers of Congress.

The 55-member commission, chaired by former University of the Philippines president Jose Abueva, had proposed that the 2007 elections be suspended to allow senators and congressmen whose terms are expiring that year to become members of an interim parliament.

It also propesed Ms Arroyo to become head of both state and government, with supervision over the interim prime minister who will assume powers in 2010.

But some of the senators rejected the report. Sen. Joker Arroyo even described the move as "dead, deader, deadest."

Even 20 members of the ConCom were not in favor of the report because the proposal would not be accepted by the people who might view it as an attempt by elective officials to push for the passage of the revised Constitution.

But Cebu Municipal Mayors League (CMML) president and Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante supported the proposal, saying electoral exercises in the country have been contentious and expensive.

Cesante said it was only good to pursue the 2007 elections once the credibility of the Commission on Election was restored.

Negros Occidental legislators wanted to determine first the legality involved in postponing the 2007 elections.

"I don't know if that is possible. We have a constitutional mandate that we cannot use the bills we pass in our favor," said Negros Occidental Rep. Tranquilino Carmona of the first district.

Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson of the third district said he expected legal battles that would go all the way to the Supreme Court if the proposal was implemented.

"It is a little bit self-serving for us to comment on the ConCom proposal," he said. "If no election is held in 2007, it will not make any difference to my public service that I will carry out with as much fervor."

Southcom head says troops too busy to join coup

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SOLDIERS in Mindanao have no time to join any destabilization move against the government, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan said.

Adan issued the statement after government chief negotiator Secretary Silvestre Afable Jr. came over and met with ranking military commanders in Mindanao.

Afable's visit came in the wake of reports of a military-led uprising against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He said Mindanao soldiers are too busy with the fight against Moro and communist guerrillas.

"We don't have anything to worry about. Our troops are not joining the so-called destabilization efforts," he said.

Afable declined to comment on reports that there is a new plot to overthrow Ms Arroyo.

"As far as I can see, even in this meeting, I see an AFP that is totally, professionally committed and loyal to the government, I do not wish to dignify those talks about coup d' etat," Afable said.

Adan said the alleged threats were not discussed during the closed-door meeting because it only centered "on the latest development in the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front."

He however admitted that he received an order to monitor and arrest, if sighted, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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By Tonette Orejas
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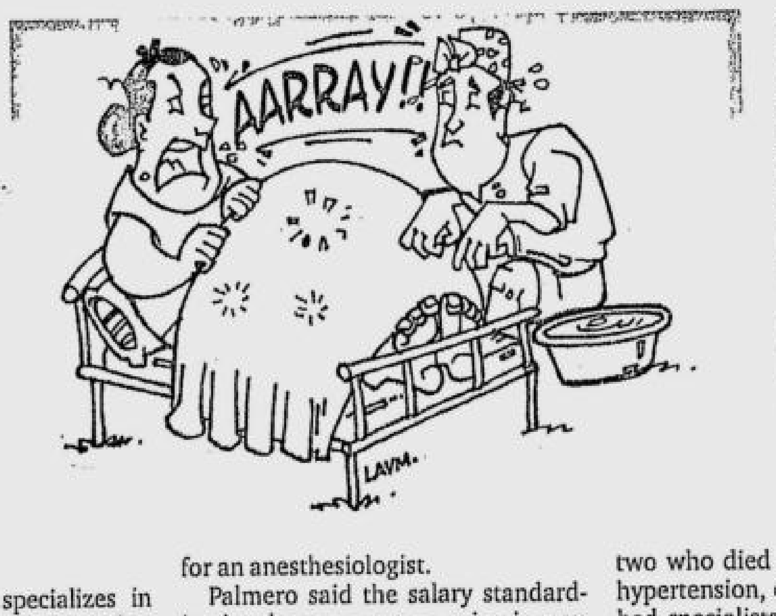


BALER, AURORA—Despite a regular search, this province has had no anesthesiologist in the last 10 years, limiting the access of pregnant women and other patients to life-saving surgical operations.

"The item has always been opened but there has always been no takers," Dr. Norma Palmero, provincial health officer, told the INQUIRER.

An anesthesiologist specializes in administering anesthesia, a drug that makes a patient numb to pain during surgery. An anesthetist used to do that work here until the Department of Health made it a policy to assign that task to an anesthesiologist, she said.

Salary issues

The remoteness of Aurora, the nonlucrative private medical practice in the province, the low monthly salary, and the exodus of doctors and other health workers for jobs abroad made the search "very difficult," she said.

Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo said she has sought the help of Health Secretary Francisco Duque to the request for an anesthesiologist.

Palmero said the salary standardization law prevents a raise in pay, making the post unattractive for anesthesiologists who get to earn P10,000 or more from just one operation. Angara said she was willing to pay more from out of her own money.

In the absence of one, she said women needing to deliver through caesarean section are taken to hospitals in Nueva Ecija, about four hours by land travel. During heavy rains, travel could extend from five to six hours.

Death record

No woman was known to have died while in transit, Castillo said.

A research by the non-government agencies Kalusugan Lingkod sa Aurora (Kalinga) and the Center for Women's Resources had recorded 19 maternal deaths in Casiguran, Dingalan, Dipaculao and Maria Aurora towns from 2002 to 2004.

"Their deaths could have been prevented by early medical intervention," said Dr. Ana Consuelo, Kalinga executive director.

The six, who died of bleeding after childbirth and the two who died of pregnancy-induced hypertension, could have been saved had specialists like anesthesiologists been available, she said.

The long distance to the hospitals and the lack of money stopped these women from seeking medical help, she said.

Kalinga and the provincial health office (PHO) have been training *hilot* (village midwives) to help them in detecting cases of high-risk pregnancies.

Most women in remote villages in Aurora rely on *hilot* for reproductive health care and child delivery.

PHO data showed that in 2004, 64.28 percent of childbirths were handled by *hilot* and the rest by doctors, nurses or midwives.

Panganiban named 21st Supreme Court Chief Justice

From page A1

which the high court still has not resolved.

These are the so-called Calibrated Pre-emptive Response policy which has allowed the police to break up protests near the Palace, and Executive Order 464 which prohibits government officials from appearing in congressional inquiries without presidential clearance.

Panganiban, in a statement, pledged to protect the independence of the judiciary.

"The significance of the timing of my appointment is not lost on me," Panganiban said. "It comes in the season of celebrating the birth of the One who has come down on earth to serve and not to be served, and who Himself is the embodiment of truth, justice and peace."

"Thus, I see my appointment as Chief Justice as an opportunity to be of even greater service to God and country."

Panganiban added: "With the support of my esteemed colleagues in the Supreme Court and the around 2,000 judges and 26,000 court personnel all over the country, I will work to safeguard the liberty of our people and to nurture their prosperity, while upholding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary."

He vowed to do this "in an atmosphere of integrity, transparency and accountability."

Senate President Franklin Drilon, speaking to reporters before the Palace announced Panganiban's new appointment, said the challenge facing the next chief justice was to show that the high court was "indeed an independent institution that will rule simply on the basis of its interpretation of the law and the Constitution."

Panganiban has been described by colleague and fellow jurist Antonio Carpio as "undoubtedly the most prolific writer of the (Supreme) Court, bar none."

In his 10 years as associate justice, Panganiban penned more than 1,000 decisions, including the one on the Cocofed case, in which the court gave the Presidential Commission on Good Government the right to vote sequestered United Coconut Planters Bank shares, which had been acquired through coco levy funds.

Panganiban, a former INQUIRER president, has also authored 10 books since 1995, writing one book a year as his way of reporting on his magistracy.

Among his books are "Love God; Serve Man," "Justice in Faith" (1997), "Battles in the Supreme Court" (1998), "Leadership by Example" (1999), "Transparency, Unanimity and Diversity," (2000) "A Centenary of Justice" (2001), "Reforming the Judiciary" (2002), "The Bio Age Dawns on the Judiciary" (2003), "Leveling the Playing Field" (2004) and "Judicial Renaissance" (2005).

Unsurpassed record

This inspired Justice Romeo Callejo Sr. to comment: "One book a year and no cases left undecided. This is Mr. Justice Artemio V. Panganiban's unsurpassed record."

Until his appointment as Chief Justice, Panganiban was concurrent chair of the Supreme Court Third Division and the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal.

He was also known for his controversial role in helping install then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as President in 2001 after the downfall of Joseph Estrada.

In his book "Reforming the Judiciary," Panganiban recounted that on the morning of Jan. 20, 2001, militants had threatened to march toward Don Chino Roces (Mendiola) Bridge, where Estrada supporters were encamped, unless he resigned.

Chaos could have ensued, especially because the government machinery had fallen down, Panganiban said in his book.

He also worried that the Vice President could not act because Estrada was still the legal leader. On the other hand, a coup d'etat might be staged, and that could obliterate the Constitution.

These led Panganiban to conclude that "the only way to avert violence, chaos and bloodshed and to save our democratic system from collapse was to have Mrs. Arroyo sworn in as President."

Prayer and reflection

He added: "After prayer and reflection, I summoned the courage to call up Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. about 5:30 a.m. to explain to him my apprehensions. I proposed that, to save the Constitution, he should swear in GMA by 12 noon of that day."

Ms Arroyo became the country's President that day.

When the question of Ms Arroyo's legitimacy arose, Davide and Panganiban inhibited themselves from the Supreme Court proceedings. On March 2, 2001, the court voted 13-0 to uphold Ms Arroyo's ascension to the top post.

A month later, the court again voted 13-0 to deny with finality Estrada's motion for reconsideration.

Of poor origins

Panganiban was born on Dec. 7, 1936, in Manila to a poor family. He supported his studies at Juan Luna Elementary School and Mapa High School by selling newspapers and cigarettes and shining shoes.

As a student at Far Eastern University, he sold textbooks to his classmates and bibles to professors.

Despite juggling work and academics, he was an honor student from elementary school to college, receiving the highest honors from FEU in 1956 when he graduated with a degree of Associate in Arts. He got a law degree from the same school in 1960, graduating cum laude and being awarded the "Most Outstanding Student."

Oustanding alumnus

He then placed sixth in the 1960 bar exams with a grade of 89.55. In 1997, he was given an honorary doctoral degree in law by the University of Iloilo.

From 1963 to 1965, he was an associate at the Salonga Ordoñez and Associates Law Office. He then formed his own firm Panganiban, Benitez, Parlade, Africa and Barinaga Law Offices, which he headed until 1995.

For his achievements, he was cited an Outstanding Manilan in 1991, Most Outstanding FEU Law Alumnus in 1988 and Most Outstanding Practicing Lawyer by the Consumers' Union of the Philippines in 1994.

Panganiban has over 200 awards and citations. He has five children with wife Elenita, professor at the Asian Institute of Management.

All his children graduated from esteemed universities in the United States, including Harvard and Stanford.

Revolving-door policy

A high government official told the Inquirer that the appointment of Panganiban to the post vacated by the retired Davide was part of Ms Arroyo's plan to "appoint as many chief justices" as possible during her incumbency up to 2010.

Although reputed to be close to Ms Arroyo, the official asked not to be identified, having no authority to speak for the President.

The INQUIRER source likened the plan to the revolving-door policy Ms Arroyo had adopted for the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police.

"Yes, just like what she did with the (AFP) chief of staff," the source said.

Under the plan, Ms Arroyo will appoint three chief justices in succession.

Puno next in line

With Panganiban retiring on his 70th birthday on Dec. 7, 2006, she will reportedly next appoint Associate Justice Reynato Puno, who will reach retirement age on May 17, 2010.

After Puno, the official said, the last chief justice under Ms Arroyo's six-year term would be administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who will turn 70 on June 15, 2015.

Puno, Panganiban and Leonardo Quisumbing were the three senior associate justices nominated to Ms Arroyo by the Judicial and Bar Council, which screens and nominates judicial appointments.

Puno is the most senior of the three while Panganiban is the earliest due for retirement among them. *With a report from Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

From nets to chisels …

From page A1

fishing village of Banglos near General Nakar.

None of the several hundred villagers in Banglos died in what was hailed as a miracle, but the dead and missing in the towns of General Nakar, Real and Infanta would top 1,800 by early December.

The three towns were cut off from help for days—bridges were washed away and the US military had to fly in helicopters for food drops as residents searched for their relatives in the mud.

The Polillo Strait into which Agos empties was transformed into a deadly sea of logs, smashing wooden boats and small rescue vessels on emergency operations.

"It was raining hard, there was no electricity and we were preparing to go to bed when there was a loud noise. There was a clap of thunder and when I looked outside, our village had been flooded," Rebate says, his voice choking with emotion.

"Then a huge log hit the door of our wooden house and we had to seek shelter on the roof," he says. They climbed up stripped to their undergarments, casting off their outer clothing that had become too heavy after being soaked in mudwater.

They and other villagers linked hands and walked over the floating logs to reach solid ground, just in time to see their village disappear.

Reevaluating the deadly logs

Survivors of the landslide waited in vain for help for days, and Christmas and the New Year soon arrived with the residents still crammed in crowded evacuation centers, where food was scant and doleouts eventually dried up.

Time and necessity have since forced the villagers to reevaluate the deadly logs.

Five months after the tragedy, and as hope of ever returning to the sea slowly vanished, a nonprofit organization called "Gawad Kalinga" (Provide Care) thought of a novel idea.

Why not train the fishermen to become sculptors instead of having them process the logs and driftwood into cheap charcoal?

The foundation tapped leading Filipino artist Rey Paz Contreras to train the men of Banglos in wood sculpting. Trainers were later surprised to discover that the former fishermen had an inherent talent for the arts.

The men first sculpted detailed wooden replicas of fish, before branching out and finding their own artistic interpretations in the washed-up logs.

Rebate is now the president of the small group of artisans, who sell their wooden crafts in trade exhibits around the country and soon, they hope, in the international market.

"The logs that once stole our lives and left us with nothing are also the ones that are giving us back our future. I had no idea how to raise my family after the tragedy, but now I know I can use my hands again not in casting nets, but in something entirely new," Rebate says above the whirr of an electronic sander he was using to smooth out the rough edges of "Diana."

"This one I hope would sell for about P6,000 ($100). It's a good gift for Christmas," he points out.

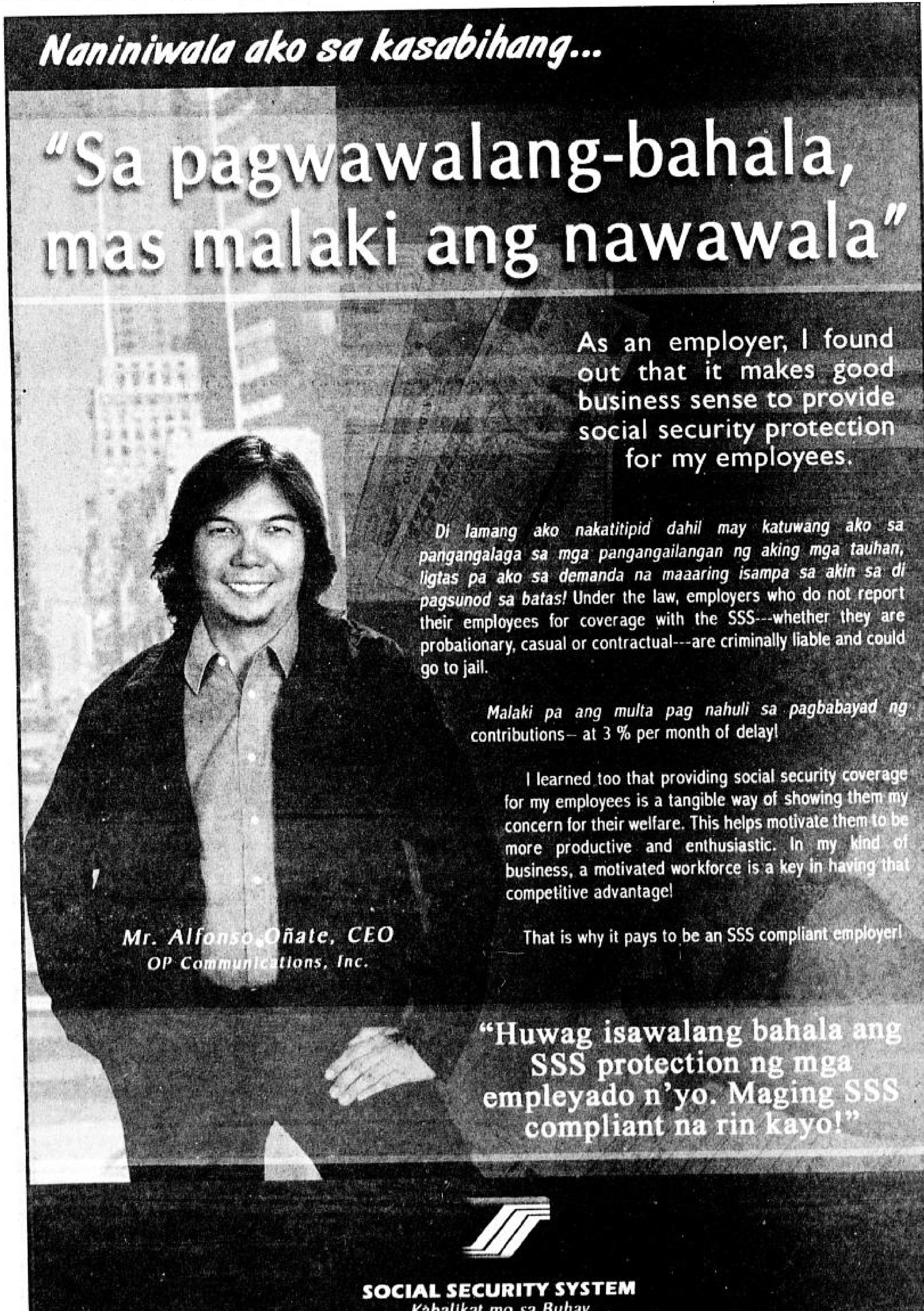
His works now range from simple wooden bowls to intricate carvings of women and sell from anywhere between P500 to P30,000 ($9-$500).

As the sculptors work in a makeshift shed, women are busy slicing up wood into small square pieces they hope to varnish and sell as paper weights. Grimy children without slippers play toss-up coins in the dirt, rain hammers the tin roof.

"This is our simple life. We are grateful to the foundation for teaching us this craft, which in some way is also therapy for us. When we carve, we somehow forget the tragedy and believe there is hope for us," says Maximo Supremo, 28 years old and also a father of two.

"We can't go back to fishing because our nets get snagged on logs that are still on the seabed. The only thing we knew to do with the logs that were being washed to the shores was to make them into charcoal," that were sold for only P65 a sack, Supremo says.

AFP



Naniniwala ako sa kasabihang...

"Sa pagwawalang-bahala, mas malaki ang nawawala"

As an employer, I found out that it makes good business sense to provide social security protection for my employees.

Di lamang ako nakatitipid dahil may katuwang ako sa pangangalaga sa mga pangangailangan ng aking mga tauhan, ligtas pa ako sa demanda na maaaring isampa sa akin sa di pagsunod sa batas! Under the law, employers who do not report their employees for coverage with the SSS---whether they are probationary, casual or contractual---are criminally liable and could go to jail.

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INQBOX Question of the Week

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Gunless 'Santa cops' at the mall

By Nancy C. Carvajal and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, EXPECT to see "unarmed Santas" in malls, churches and other public places in the metropolis.

These Santas, however, will not be dressed in red. They will be in police uniform with a Santa hat. They will be armed, not with a gun, but with gifts to distribute to children. And crooks, beware: these Santas are experts in hand to hand combat.

The deployment of unarmed Santas to public places was ordered by National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Vidal Querol in a memorandum he issued earlier this month to the five police districts in the metropolis.

"They may not have guns but they (should be able to) respond to any situation that need their expertise," Querol said. He added that the presence of policemen would discourage criminals from taking advantage of people during the holiday rush.

Apart from keeping the peace and ensuring the safety of shoppers, the unarmed Santas will also "distribute gifts to small children in the mall" in order to enhance the image of policemen, Querol said.

A policeman, according to the NCRPO chief's memo, should be known as a friend of children, not as a person to be feared.

As people go to malls to do their Christmas shopping, owners of upscale department stores in eastern Metro Manila have beefed up their security.

Some have even installed new closed circuit television cameras.

Querol personally inspected several posh malls in Mandaluyong City, San Juan and Quezon City yesterday morning to check the security measures being implemented.

Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela said the mall owners showed their new CCTVs during the inspection.

"Mall owners and employees are now more aware of security concerns," Valenzuela said.

But the police's Christmas wish though is for mall owners to sustain the security measures even after the holiday season.

Querol inspected SM Megamall, Podium, Robinson's Galleria, Shangri-La, Star Mall, Greenhills Shopping Center and Gateway Mall at the Araneta Center.

Second time around for carjackers in QC

By DJ Yap

CAR THIEVES STRUCK ANEW IN Quezon City the other night, taking at gunpoint the sports utility vehicle of a bank executive—the second reported case in the city this month.

Two armed men aboard a silver sedan blocked a dark gray Toyota Fortuner being driven by Godofredo Fuego, 47, along Congressional near corner Visayas Avenues in Barangay Bahay Toro on Monday at 9:45 p.m.

The police said the suspects acted as though the SUV had bumped them, cursing at the driver who was with an unidentified housemaid.

Armed with a .45-caliber handgun, one of the suspects boarded the SUV, with license plate ZBY-166, and sped away, with Fuego and the housemaid inside.

The suspects headed for Valenzuela City, where they dropped off the driver and the housemaid, said Quezon City Police District anticarnapping (Ancar) unit head Chief Insp. Rudy Jaraza.

The SUV was owned by a bank manager who asked not to be named.

Jaraza said the owner had asked his housemaid and driver to buy medicine. But on their way back to Violago Homes III, the sedan, with no car plates, blocked their path.

The incident was the second case of carjacking in the city.

On Dec. 17, a Nissan X-trail, with license plate XSL-318, was taken forcibly from John Michael Cusi on Palanan Street corner Retiro by two unidentified gunmen, according to Ancar records.

The victim was also dropped off somewhere in Valenzuela City, prompting police to believe that the same group of carjackers was responsible for both cases.

Jaraza said Ancar had already identified the suspects and was just waiting for the opportunity to catch them.

Only four members of the criminal group still operate in Quezon City and Valenzuela City, he added.

A Christmas party sans gifts, laughter

By DJ Yap

THIS CHRISTMAS PARTY WAS not about food, gifts and parlor games, but of a common grief and a shared quest for justice.

Four families gathered yesterday morning for "Paskuhan," a simple celebration to mark their first Christmas without their kin who became victims of political killings this year.

But instead of exchanging stories about the tragedy that befell them, the attendees opted for silent remembrance as they enjoyed an early Christmas meal.

The gathering, attended by the kin of Federico de Leon, Ramon Namuro, Leodegario Punzal, and Nilo Bayas, was held at the Cathedral Hall of the Episcopal Church of the Philippines on E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd., Quezon City.

The four members of militant organizations such as Anakpawis and the transport group Piston based in Bulacan and Caloocan City were killed in separate incidents this year in what was perceived as an attack on activist workers.

'A glimmer of hope'

Organized by the National Coalition for the Protection of Human Rights (NCPHR) and the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR), Paskuhan sought to "embrace" the victims of political assassinations and ease their grief.

"Our objective is to provide them with a glimmer of hope that peace and justice still lie within reach," said Pastor Reynaldo Cortez, spokesperson of NCPHR.

"We want to show them that Christ will not leave them this Christmas" amid the difficult times, he added.

The groups originally wanted to include the families of slain trade or union leaders, such as those in Hacienda Luisita, but most of them begged off, citing security risks, said CTUHR public information officer Rossi Baraquiel.

The event was meant to show solidarity and support for the families, who would be celebrating their first Christmas without their husbands, fathers or sons, she said. About 25 people attended the event, many of whom were children.

Florencia de Leon, 52, Federico's wife, came all the way from Bulacan to attend Paskuhan.

The mother of four had not known that she would be with other victims of political assassinations.

Emotional gathering

She said she did not want to talk about her late husband with whom she had been estranged for some time before his killing. But she could not help but shed tears as she spoke.

Federico de Leon, the Anakpawis Bulacan chair and a leader of Piston, was killed on Oct. 26 in Central Luzon.

Representatives from each of the families were asked to share their experiences before the group, Baraquiel said.

Nilo Bayas' daughter, Glysa, was the first to speak. But she only managed to thank the organizers before she was overcome with emotion.

Seeing this, the others also shed tears. Nobody else had the heart to speak, Baraquiel said.

They spent the rest of the day eating and having fun instead.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 21, 2005
4th Week of Advent

1st Reading: Song 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18:
Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mary then set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

Commentary

The Good News of her child to be born puts Mary in mortal danger and she flees to the hill country and shelter with Elizabeth who is also in an unusual predicament: pregnant unexpectedly in her old age. The two are kindred spirits in hope, wonder and awe knowing that their children will change not only their lives drastically but the lives of their nation and history. They recognize each other and Elizabeth's John recognizes the voice that called him into existence in the Spirit in Mary's greeting of Shalom. It is all about peace—peace come to earth in flesh and blood. Peace that is the presence of God reconciling all the earth and her children. Peace meeting the truth and blessings fall like rain upon the earth. Are we this presence of peace?

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METROBRIEFS

A chilly Christmas

ANG L-L-L-LAMIIIG!

IT WILL be a chilly Christmas for policemen stationed at the Makati Central Police Headquarters. The drop in temperature though, is not due to the cool December breeze but the 24-hour centralized air-conditioning system in their new building. "Everything else is the same, the way we do our job is the same ... it's just the cold, we are not used to (it being) this cold all day," said MPD Theft and Robbery Unit chief, Insp. Marlon Almoguerra. The policemen are not complaining though. Their old police headquarters had limited air-conditioning while other offices had to make do with electric fans. Since moving to their new home at the corner of Gil Puyat Avenue and Yakal Street, however, the policemen have had to adjust to the temperature which ranges from a high of 25 degrees Celsius to a low of 16 degrees Celsius. "We always carry jackets. It gets really cold especially at night, that's why usually we adjust the thermostat or just place the air-con in fan mode," said PO2 Rody Tallud. The new Makati Central Police Headquarters is modeled after the New York and Los Angeles police headquarters. It is the first phase of the city's plan to create a complex for its protective services in a strategic location just an intersection away from the business district.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Carolers, beware

A 40-YEAR-OLD man is now behind bars after allegedly kissing an 8-year-old girl and trying to undress her when she and her friends went caroling in front of his house in Marikina City the other night. But suspect Ernesto Flores, 40, vehemently denied the allegation. The 8-year-old girl went to his house on Kaolin Street in Barangay Parang at about 7 p.m. Monday with three other girls. But after singing, Flores allegedly took the girl to the backyard and started kissing and undressing her, police said in a report. The girl started crying, catching the attention of her 9-year-old cousin who came with her. They managed to run and report the incident to her mother, police added. Flores claimed that he merely invited the girls inside the house to eat "spaghetti and cake." "I went to the kitchen to get them food. Then I heard the girl crying. But when I got back at the sala, they were gone," he said. Flores said he was willing to face the complainants to prove his innocence.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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BI probes escape of 3 detainees

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Jerome Aning

"HEADS WILL ROLL," BUREAU of Immigration (BI) chief Alipio Fernandez Jr. promised yesterday as he ordered a full investigation of the escape late Monday evening of three foreigners detained at the agency's jail in Bicutan, Taguig City.

Fernandez said he had already ordered the relief of guards on duty at the BI jail at the time of the incident. He also instructed the warden and other officials on duty to submit their explanation on the jailbreak within 24 hours.

The prisoners who escaped were identified as Tan Ti Shao and Go Sak Ping, both Chinese nationals facing drug trafficking charges, and a Sri Lankan, Jayamaha Mudalege Don Keerthi Jamayaha, who was detained for overstaying.

Jamayaha was also facing charges in the Office of the Ombudsman for the illegal deportation of kidnap suspect Zhang Du, a Chinese national. Zhang was able to leave the country on May 7 despite a pending kidnap for ransom case in court.

"I am forming a fact-finding committee to investigate this incident and recommend what disciplinary and legal actions should be taken against those involved," Fernandez said in a statement.

Initial investigation revealed that the three staged the jailbreak at past 11 p.m. on Monday. It was not yet clear how they managed to escape.

"We condemn in the strongest possible sense the escape of Sri Lankan national Jayamaha Mudalege Don Keerthi Jamayaha or 'Keerthi'," NBI Special Task Force chief Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda said, adding that the BI should have employed "extraordinary means in ensuring the security of the detention center to prevent the suspects' escape."

Esmeralda added that they were hoping that Keerthi, a principal player in Zhang's illegal deportation, would change his mind and turn state witness.

The NBI had charged a top official of the BI and eight others, including Keerthi, earlier this month for allegedly facilitating Zhang's deportation.

Zhang was arrested in connection with the kidnap of businesswoman Jackie Tiu in San Fernando City, La Union, on Sept. 27, 2001.

REM ZAMORA

GIFT GIVING
Residents of Moriones, Tondo wait expectantly as the Manila City government distributed Christmas gift packs yesterday.

Award-winning Marikina studes turn janitor fish skin into wallets

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FISHERMEN MAY HATE THEM, but the janitor fish which thrive in the Marikina River are bringing out the best in science students of Marikina City.

Students of the Marikina Science High School (MSHS) have found various uses for the fish.

Its skin could be used with leather to make shoes and wallets. The meat could be turned into chicken feed.

And yes, oil from the fish could be converted into biofuel, MSHS teacher Janet Amurao, 50, said.

"We were able to prove that the janitor fish is no longer a pest, but a form of marine life which has many uses," she said.

Janitor fish, also called suckermouth fish, has been multiplying quickly in the river, gobbling up the algae and depriving other fish of needed nutrients, thus giving the city government a headache.

To solve the problem, the city government launched several programs to control their population, even promising cash rewards to fishermen who would catch a big number of janitor fish.

Amurao was a member of the city-wide committee organized last year to solve the problem. She also sought her students' help in finding a solution.

Rising to the challenge, her students started conducting experiments, the initial results of which were presented this year at the Department of Science and Technology Science Fair, sponsored by Intel Philippines.

Their efforts paid off. The students won third place in the regional level's team category with their "leather-out-of-janitor-fish-skin" project.

Amurao said the skin was thick enough to be used along with real leather in making shoes and wallets, for which Marikina City is known.

Her son, Raymond Joseph, 15, also won first place in the individual category. His experiment was converting oil from the fish into biofuel, which is "almost similar" to the quality of the coco-diesel the national government is promoting, Amurao said.

The biofuel from janitor fish could be used to run vehicles, she claimed.

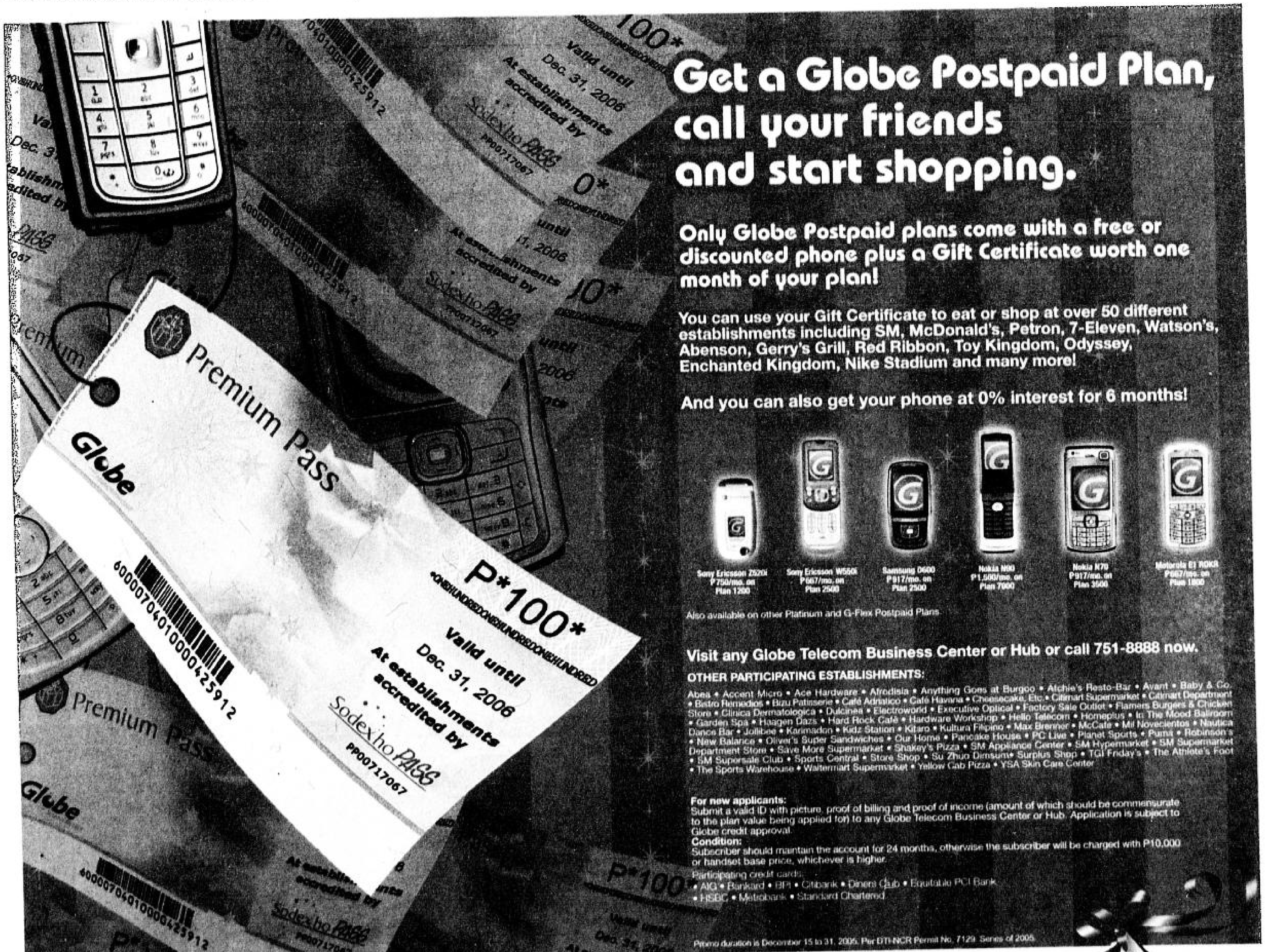
Heavy traffic? Don't blame us, says MMDA

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE SUSPENSION OF THE NUMBER CODING SYSTEM plus the Christmas rush equals traffic bottlenecks all over Metro Manila.

But the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said yesterday that there could be other factors that contribute to the heavy traffic in the Metro's major thoroughfares during the holiday season. For the first time during the holidays, the MMDA lifted the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) from Monday until Jan. 1, 2006, a two-week period when all private vehicles could go on the road with no restrictions.

Based on a traffic check of the MMDA 24-hour road monitoring system, traffic had become heavier in the last two days, particularly in both directions of Edsa and portions of C5 Road. "I cannot give an assessment yet because it's only been two days," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center executive director. The traffic chief added that motorists should not blame the UVVRP suspension for the traffic buildup. Private motorists had requested the suspension, he said, adding that other factors like a stalled 18-wheeler yesterday held up traffic on the southbound portion of Edsa.



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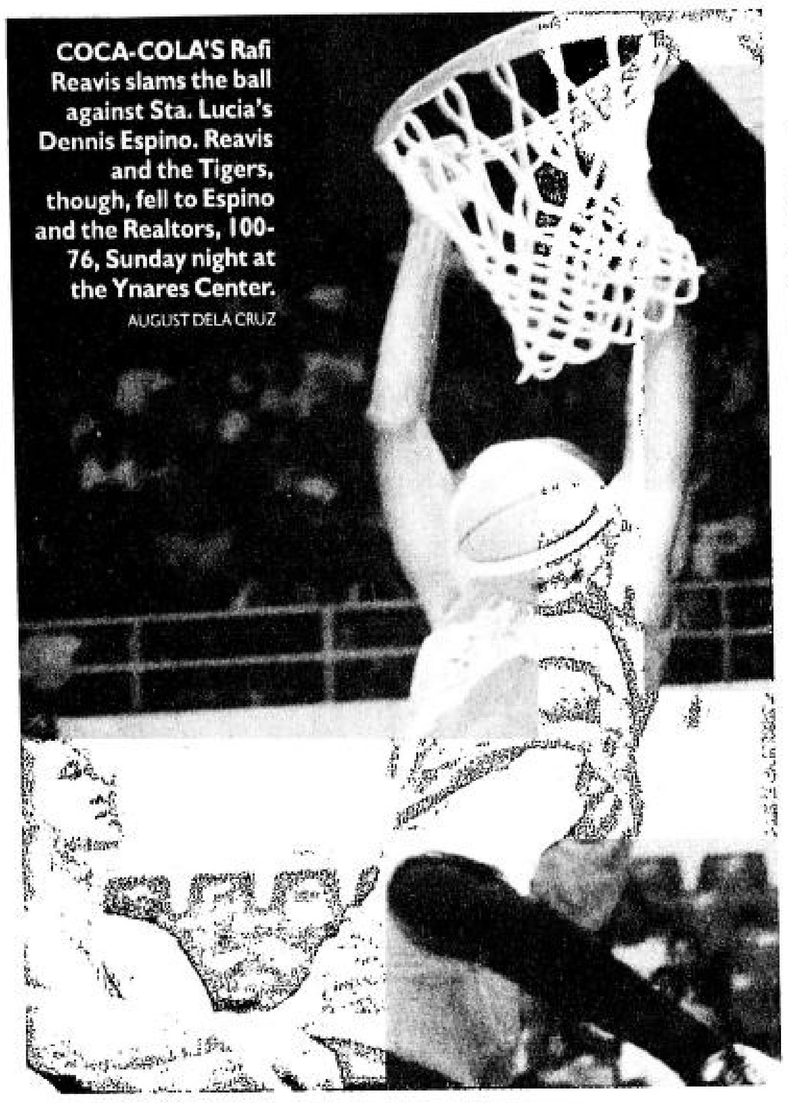
COCA-COLA'S Rafi Reavis slams the ball against Sta. Lucia's Dennis Espino. Reavis and the Tigers, though, fell to Espino and the Realtors, 100-76, Sunday night at the Ynares Center.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAMES TODAY (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:40 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Barangay Ginebra
7:25 p.m.—Alaska vs San Miguel Beer

TALK 'N TEXT TRIES TO MOVE closer to Purefoods Chunkee while Barangay Ginebra grapples for survival in the race for an automatic semifinal berth today in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Cuneta Astrodome.

After winning back-to-back games, the Phone Pals are now in a much better position compared to their rivals for the other semifinal seat on the strength of a second-running 8-6 record.

Claiming the scalp of the Kings would qualify the Phone Pals to at least a playoff for the remaining semifinal slot while finishing the classification round with a win over San Miguel Beer assures them of an outright appearance in the semis.

But sweeping the Kings and the Beermen will be a tall order for a team troubled by injuries the last two outings.

Key players Vic Pablo, Mark Telan and Harvey Carey are nursing various leg ailments while rookie Anthony Washington went to the United States to correct a dislocated shoulder.

The Kings are looking to break out of a losing rut after yielding the past three games. The defending champions are bringing in Chris Porter to replace Sean Lampley.

Listed at 6-foot-7, the 215-pound Porter was collegiate star in the US NCAA while playing for Auburn University in the late '90s. Porter played for the Golden State Warriors during the 2000-2001 NBA season with averages of 8.6 points and 3.7 rebounds per game.

The Beermen try to stay out of the cellar when they go up against the Alaska Aces in the other game.

June Navarro

Harbour Centre's Reyes week's best

ROBB REYES DEFIES THE stereotype of a foreign-born Filipino basketball player. There's less style in his game. It's mostly substance.

So don't be surprised if he breaks the stereotype of players who've won the Player of the Week award in the 2006 PBL Heroes' Cup.

Although he was very much in the radar against Far Eastern Insurance, scoring 17 points and grabbing nine boards in an 82-80 Portmasters victory, Reyes was doing the dirty work in the sidelines when Harbour Centre scored a 74-70 upset of Granny Goose.

Slowed down by a knee injury, the 6-foot-7 Reyes grabbed 12 rebounds as he provided the Portmasters' defense with a lot of muscle.

"One good thing about Robb is that he plays with lots of passion," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent. "He's not a fancy player but I like his attitude."

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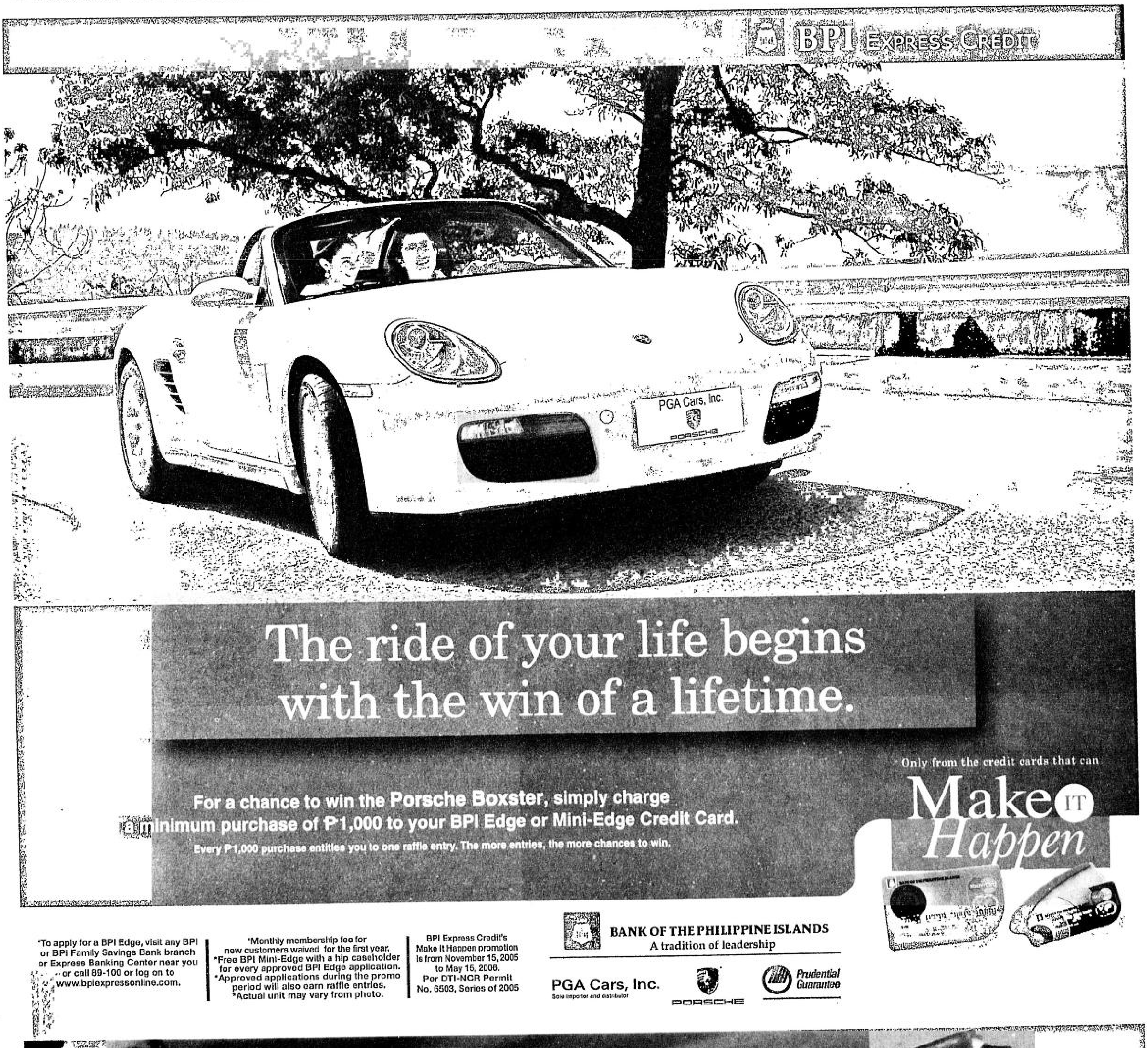
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Severino clinches 5 Para Games golds

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOR THE LONGEST TIME, THE ACHIEVEments of fide master Sander Severino, an expert in blindfold chess, never saw the light of day.

All that's history now.

Severino was lauded yesterday after emerging as the Philippines' best medal performer by capturing five gold medals in chess at the close of the 3rd Asean Para Games.

With the 20-year-old paraplegic accounting for nearly one-fourth of the country's gold medal tally, the Philippines finished sixth overall in the 11-nation field with a 22-41-37 gold-silver-bronze record.

It was the Philippines' highest output since the Games' inception in 2001, a big jump from its 2-15-23 output in the 2003 Para Games in Vietnam.

"The performance of our athletes only proves that we have the potential," said Michael Barredo, chair of the Philippine Asean Para Games Organizing Committee. "And given sufficient support, proper exposure and training, our differentlyabled athletes can excel and bring honor for flag and country in the international sporting arena."

Severino, the 2002 Asean Youth chess champion, clinched two golds in the blindfold individual and blindfold team chess events on Monday night at the GSIS Gymnasium in Pasay City.

A native of Silay City, Negros Occidental, Severino also ruled the handicapped individual, handicapped team and the combined team (handicapped and blind) events.

Chess also produced the country's second-best performer with Henry Lopez picking up four golds in the blindfold team, handicapped team, combined individual and combined team events.

Dominating the Games from Day 1, Thailand bagged the overall champion anew with a 139-64-28 medal haul.

Vietnam ranked second with an 80-36-22 output, while Malaysia finished third at 75-40-26.

Minnie Ramos delivered the Philippines' final gold after repulsing Trahn Nguyen Quyanh of Vietnam, 11-12, 11-8, 12-10, 11-5, in the handicapped singles event of the table tennis competition yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. It was the second gold for Ramos.

Stockinger 18th in world karting

PHILIPPINES
SFIC

STOCKINGER (left) and Marcel Thenu in the recent Rotax Max World Karting Final. Stockinger finished 18th in the Junior category, while Thenu landed 24th in the Senior category.

DESPITE A MECHANICAL GLITCH, MARLON Stockinger finished 18th in the Rotax Max World Karting Final in Langkawi, Malaysia, recently.

The 14-year-old Stockinger, competing in the Junior category, started eighth in the first qualifying race and finished fifth. In the second race, a hose inside his kart's fuel tank broke loose during the warm up lap and forced him to watch the race on the roadside. Stockinger ran in the second chance race and won to earn a place in the pre-final where he started from 25th place. Stockinger rallied and eventually landed 18th out of 47 drivers.

Burlington plays SEAG part

SPORTS PATRON BURLINGTON INDIRECTLY played a part in Team Philippines' success in the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

This is through the theme song "Pinoy Ako" of the hit reality TV show Pinoy Big Brother on Channel 2.

Burlington, the official socks of the PBA, became a part of the PBB family when it was appointed as "Medyas ni Kuya" by ABS-CBN, producer of the PBB.

ABS-CBN also gave Burlington Industries Phils. (BIP) Inc. the exclusive rights in the country to make and market caps headbands, armbands and wristbands with the Pinoy Big Brother logo.

"We are proud to be a partner of ABS-CBN in this project that has captured the hearts of the Filipino nation for the past 100 days," said Ruddy Tan, general manager of Burlington. Tan added that he witnessed how "Pinoy Ako" became a rallying point for the Filipino athletes as they won the overall title. Among Burlington's past endorsers were cage heroes Norman Black, Vince Hizon and Rich Alvarez.

Spring, NBC tilt Jan. 5

ALL IS SET FOR THE southern legs of the Nature's Spring-National Basketball Conference (NBC) pre-season series.

The Valencia Golden Harvest of Mayor Jose Galario Jr. and Pagadian City cagers of Mayor Sammy Co will host two of the three preseason events next month.

Six teams will see action in the Valencia leg set Jan. 5-9. These are first NBC champion Tribu Sugbu, General Santos City-based Pacman of the world boxing titlist Manny Pacquiao, Pagadian City, Digos, North Cotabato and Golden Harvest.

A special prize of P70,000 is up for grabs in the tourney.

The Pagadian leg will be held Jan. 11-14 with the Skygo/Sirlitz-backed Tribu Sugbu of businessmen Lito Gillamac and Mario King seeing action against reigning NBC national champion Ozamiz Cotta of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog, Valencia and Pagadian.

"We (NBC) have a busy schedule starting next month, leading to a bigger third season which will open on March 10," said NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla.

The pre-season legs are supported by Sulpicio Lines, Prime Channel, Spring Cooking Oil and Molten.

SPORTSWATCH

Canare forges triple upset

SUBIC—Unheralded Rizal Canare forged a triple upset when he upstaged multi-titled Jolet Jao and two others recently at the conclusion of the 2005 Honda One Make Race at the Subic International Raceway of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Canare turned back Jao in the Wave 100 Superstock Expert division of this event presented by Speedgear Sports Inc. under the supervision of motocross legend Joey Almeda. He also thwarted top favorite Bryan Ortile in the XRM 110 Superstock Expert division and Arlan de la Cruz in the Wave 125 Superstock Expert division. Joanna Arreglado captured the first prize in the ladies division.

NCA 7-cock derby finals today

THE TOP guns of Philippine cockfighting renew their fierce rivalry today when the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-cock derby finals gets underway at the air-conditioned San Juan Coliseum. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. About 55 fights are lined up beginning at 6 p.m. with Rizal Gov. Casimiro "Ito" Ynares and Richard Bates as hosts. The third leg of the NCA derby series is slated on Jan. 9 and 11(Sundance Group of Danny Valero and Phil Say). Then, on Jan. 16, 18 and 20, all eyes will be focused on the NCA International 8-cock derby. More than 20 foreign cockers, led by defending champion Joe Wolcott, have confirmed their arrival.

Makati 6-cocker resumes

THE FIFTH and last elimination round of Pamaskong Salpukan 6-cock derby gets underway today at the air-conditioned Makati Coliseum featuring more than 60 fights. Three participants posted three victories each from Monday's elimination round: Tony Lasala (San Isidro), Boy de Roca (Jojit II) and Pahamak entry. Another De Roca entry tallied three wins last Dec. 17, along with the entries of Joel Ocsena, Bong Garcia, Rey Briones, Emil Chua, Lito Orillaza and Capt. Bernie Arthur. Championship rounds are scheduled on Dec. 26 and 28. The WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. headed by Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co is also extending the "buy-one, take-one" promo. Call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

Fastest Win event set at PCC

THE FASTEST Win One-Cock Ulutan will be held at the Pasay City Cockpit today with the full support of Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The first of more than 75 fights sizzles at 10 a.m. Pit managers Eric dela Rosa, Butchoy Olano and Roming Vergara said the fastest win champion will bring home a brand new Honda Wave motorcycle.The first five winners will get P1,000 and groceries. Likewise, the slowest win champion will get a Nokia cell phone while the last fight winners, a color TV. To be hosted by JAD Group, the event requires an entry fee of P1,100. For details, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-675.

Candelaria meet stakes P7 million

THE 2006 Candelaria 7-Cock Derby will be held from Jan. 29 to Feb. 2, 2006 at the Iloilo Coliseum in Jaro town. A whopping P7 million in total prizes are up for grabs with the entry fee pegged at P48,000 and minimum bet at P22,000. Thunderbird Power Feeds is supporting the 39th edition of the event being hosted by Chito Tinsay with assistance from The Iloilo Sportsmen, Inc.

NBC TEAM owners and officials: Seated are Rico Ocho (Valencia), Ernie de Leon, Tito Palma, Lito Gillamac (Tribu) and Jack Huang (Hapee/Dewfoam). Standing are Leo Lumanas (Valencia), Angelo Rentoy (Iligan), Lawrence Chongson (Bacchus/Harbour Centre) and Army Marata (Pagadian).

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Joy and hell in Atienza's Manila

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

HE MAY NOT HAVE THE FACE OF A POPE, but Mayor Lito Atienza clearly knew how much joy Manila deserves.

OK, joy, not expensive gifts, is the true gift of Christmas, declares Pope Benedict XVI.

But hasn't Mayor Atienza, naughty eyes and ruddy cheeks, been trying his darn best to bring joy to his constituents 12 months a year?

Life gets harder, traffic turns from impossible to hellish every day in the metropolis, but Atienza never fails to look for something to make poor people feel better.

Maybe it's his way of saying sorry for all the mounting mix-up and the maddening poverty in his midst?

***

Look, the Pope, despite all his fervent wishes, cannot put an end to the assorted mayhem which the capital of the Philippines has unwillingly inherited.

But bringing joy to his constituents? Don't tell that to Mayor Atienza.

At the rate his tenure has been accepted, it's easy to suspect Atienza had concocted the gladness formula well ahead of others.

Maybe it's an inborn gift. Or the happy trait has been acquired through years of propping up the image of those who had preceded him.

Atienza has that knack for the saleable. For example, he joined our table last month in Tagbilaran to request boxing expert Hermie Rivera to help him put up something grand for Manileños next summer.

***

Manny Pacquiao, an adopted son of Manila, may be too expensive a proposal.

But Atienza wants something big, a world boxing extravaganza featuring a celebrated Pinoy fighter, either Brian Viloria, Boom Boom Bautista. Or any respected boxer whose glorious record could send crowds running to the open-air Rizal Park venue.

Atienza envisions something memorable as the Battle of Manila Bay of June 1996, when Luisito Espinosa defended his world featherweight crown against Mexico's Cesar Sotto before a record live attendance at the Luneta Grandstand.

Mayor Atienza wants an unforgettable summer for Manileños, a fitting follow-up to the spectacular SEA Games performance by Team Philippines.

***

Bay Walk. Paraiso ng Batang Maynila. The Bonifacio Park in front of the Postal Office.

These are only three renovation masterpieces which Atienza has mounted in his "Buhayin ang Maynila" crusade.

The public library at the corner of Penafrancia in Pandacan, the refurbished San Andres Gymnasium, etc.

There's always a new pocket of gladness, bright spots to surprise the Manila visitor.

That he has succeeded in bringing valid gladness around was confirmed when Atienza was mobbed by adoring constituents, who had started chanting his name when they saw him exiting from the opening day rites of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Rizal Park on Dec. 5.

***

That's about it. Now, let's get down to business.

This is not to dare Mayor Atienza.

But we've to report here that his power and effectiveness as the chief executive of the City of Manila is being slurred by police and barangay authorities, the main causes of a terrorizing bottleneck in the Old Panaderos area, right after the Lambingan Bridge coming from Sta. Ana.

A perennial victim of this malpractice, we decided to conduct our own investigation a few days after the recent opening of the Pure Gold grocery center in the area.

The dreaded stretch leading to Kalentong in Mandaluyong has turned into a devil's gymnasium, with the illegal terminals and clog-causing spots managed and manipulated by a shameless police officer and a barangay chair, aided by his sons, who get weekly bribes from drivers associations, mainly on the Boni Avenue route.

There will never be a permanent solution to the traffic mess in the area.

But Lito Atienza could prevent the lights from totally going.

All he has to do is dare go after the devil's team men who allow violations and thereby make sure there would be daily hell after the Lambingan Bridge.

Pacquiao spars with Linares

PACQUIAO

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY PACquiao sparred with Japan-based Venezuelan Jorge Linares yesterday as part of his preparations for his Jan. 21 return battle with Mexico's Erik "El Terrible" Morales.

The undefeated Linares, managed by influential Japanese promoter Akihiko Honda, was at the Wild Card Gym accompanied by his promoter and sparred for a few rounds with Pacquiao.

Rex "Wakee" Salud, a close associate of the Filipino hero, also said that Pacquiao did not put too much pressure on the young Linares during their first sparring session.

Linares is priming up for his Jan. 7 bout against Philippine featherweight champ Jeffrey Onate in Tokyo being put up by Honda's Teiken Promotions. Last September, Linares figured in a near-tragic fight when he sent Filipino Ayon Naranjo to the hospital after six rounds.

Meanwhile, reports coming out of Mexico have indicated that Morales has now switched to using the punchers gloves, Cleto Reyes, in preparing for the rematch with Pacquiao.

Unson, Medalla lead

ANDIE UNSON AND FELICIA Medalla streaked to double-digit leads in the girls division even as AR Ramos and Miguel Tabuena pulled away from their rivals yesterday after the penultimate round of the Young Guns 2005 Golf Invitational Tournament at the Tagaytay Midlands course.

Unson exploded with a 73 for a 158 total and bloated her lead to 24 strokes in the 10-years division while Medalla went 22 up in the 9-years bracket after a 92-196.

Holding just a two-shot lead before he teed off, Tabuena scored a 77 for a 144 to pad his lead to seven in the 10-years group, the same cushion Ramos enjoyed in the 9-years age-group. Ramos remained very steady with a 72-145.

The battle was tight in the boys 15-17 years as Miko Yee held a two-shot lead over Miko Alejandro and Korean Kong Byung Min only three shots adrift. Debbie de Villa was already 19 shots ahead of sister Linnel in the girls side of the same age-group.

Justin Dy and Princess Superal were on top in the 8 and under; Angela de Villa kept Christina Potenciano at bay in the girls 11 years while Big John Ybanez and Stephanie Olea paced the 12-years division.

Korean kids also took the lead in three divisions with Si Woo Kim up by seven in boys 10 years, and Byung Ju Park (boys) and Young Kyung Woo (girls) in the 13-14 class.

The tourney is sponsored by Philippine Airlines, ICTSI (International Container Terminal Services Inc.), Heinz UFC, Production Village Corp., Media Circuit Inc., Pair Cargo, Golf De pot, Sunbolt Sports Drink, Earl McCarthy, Call Asia Inc., URC-Universal Robina Corp. and Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club.

Exciting raffle prizes among them a round-trip-ticket for two to Hong Kong courtesy of PAL, 10 iPod Shuffles and two iPod Nanos will be raffled off in today's awarding ceremony.

FVR guest in Jungolf anniversary tilt

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. Ramos and officials of various golf organizations and companies will hit the ceremonial balls for the 30th anniversary tournament of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines tomorrow at the Riviera Golf and Country Club Couples in Silang, Cavite.

Invited to join Ramos and Jungolf president Generoso "Bang" Mamaril in the opening ceremonies at 8 a.m. are Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines Inc. president Ogie Manalo, Philippine Airlines president Jimmy Bautista, Admiral Luisito Fernandez and Bobby Santiago of the National Golf Association of the Philippines and Riviera president Commodore Danny Pizarro.

Organizers, meanwhile, have decided to send off the field of more than 150 players composed of present players, alumni via shotgun start at 9 a.m.

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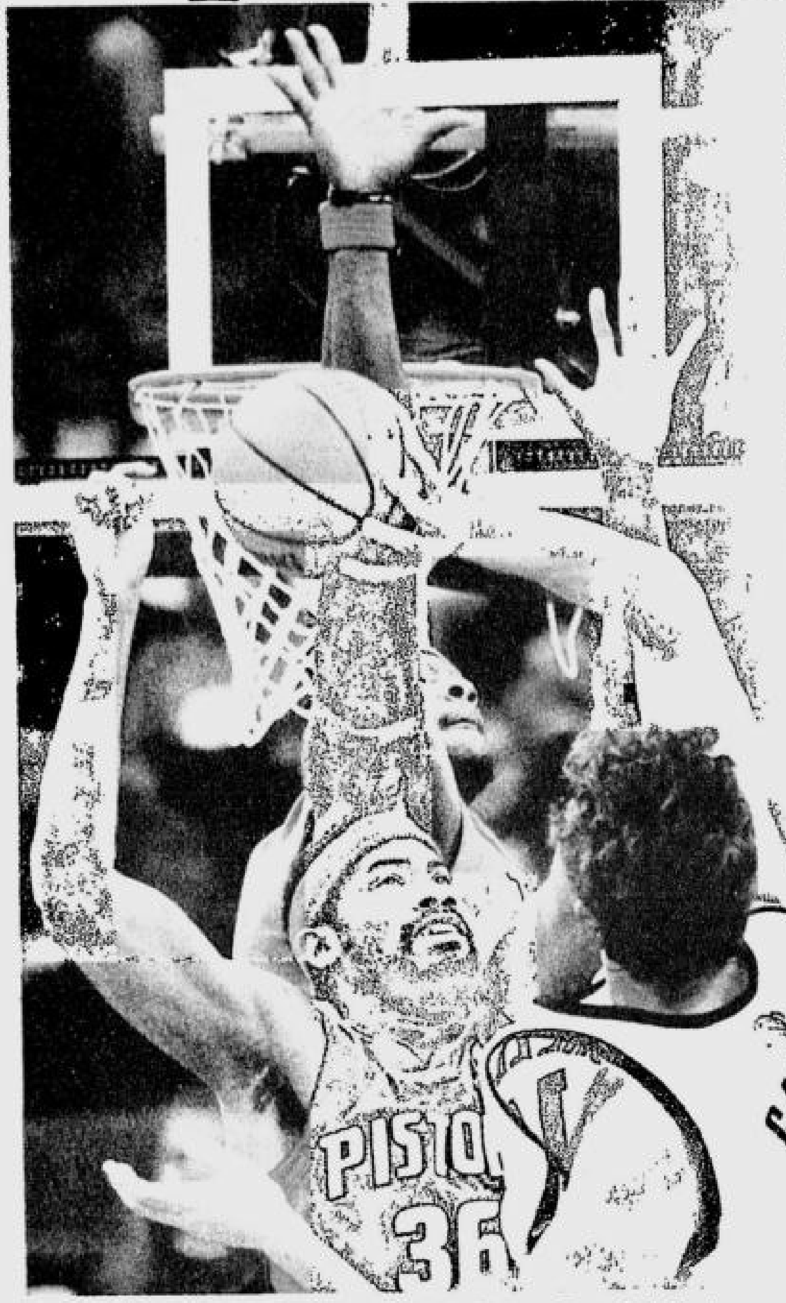
Raptors nip Magic



MEMPHIS' Pau Gasol finds his path blocked by two Detroit defenders. AP

ORLANDO—MORRIS PETERSON hit a three-pointer with eight seconds left to lead the Toronto Raptors a 92-90 victory over the Orlando Magic in National Basketball Association play Monday.

Peterson scored 19 points for the Raptors, who are just 5-20 but have four wins on the road this season.

Chris Bosh also had 19 points and added 12 rebounds for the Raptors, who are 4-1 on the road in December and broke a three-game losing streak with the win.

"If you get an open look in this league, you've got to knock down the shot and we were knocking them down tonight," said Peterson.

The Raptors made nine-of-16 shots from beyond the arc and had five players in double figures, including Jalen Rose, who added 15 points.

Mike James added 13 points for Toronto, while Joey Graham chipped in with 11.

Steve Francis scored 20 points and Jameer Nelson added 14 for the Magic, who have lost seven of their last nine games.

"This was a bad loss for us," Orlando coach Brian Hill said. "We have to get out of this habit of taking two steps forward and one step back before we can start moving forward again."

Tony Battie added 13 points and hauled down nine rebounds for the Magic.

In Memphis, Chauncey Billups scored 30 points and had nine assists as the Detroit Pistons beat the Grizzlies 106-104 in double overtime.

The Pistons, who improved to an NBA-best 19-3 with the win. *Reuters*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Toronto 92, Orlando 90; Charlotte 106, Sacramento 103, OT; Boston 109, Golden State 98; Detroit 106, Memphis 104, 2OT; Seattle 111, Washington 101

Thank you, Mike Keon

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

ON THE EVE OF THE SEA GAMES ATHLETES' departure for Hongkong, a reward from First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for their performance, I got a letter from Yna Yang.

Yna wrote about the influence of the Games on her family, which I thought you might find interesting.

Dear Ms Celis,

Most letters from the readers concerning the recent SEA Games are congratulatory. With your indulgence, allow me to write about how the Games have moved a very private, ordinary family.

We have never been big sports fans, with our exposure limited to the kids' physical education classes, occasional weekend/summer games and their father's passion for golf.

However, in the last SEAG, we made time to watch the Games, not just on TV but in the actual sites.

Our athletes were spectacular. It was evident that their excellent performance was the result of rigid training, dedication and sacrifice. To say they did us proud is an understatement.

To simple folks like us, it was an experience of many levels. For the first time our children understood the pain and glory of competition, grace in defeat, and the rewards of giving one's best. It all became a crash course in values education.

With most of the athletes having little or no resources, the Games also served as an inspiration, because they were able to overcome all the obstacles, beaten the odds, to achieve the near-impossible.

Bagging the overall title was a team effort. We thank our sports leaders, officials, for pulling this off, despite their bickerings amongst themselves.

Even those against him will have to grudgingly admit that First Gentleman Mike Arroyo found a noble calling as the Godfather of RP sports. After the athletes, we have to give credit where credit is due and this is another reason I chose to write to you. You are one of only two or three columnists objective and brave enough to acknowledge the contribution of Mike Keon.

As national training director for the games, we heard he personally supervised and monitored the training of our athletes. To his credit, Mr. Keon never grabbed the limelight or took a bow when it was obvious that his being part of Team Philippines made a big difference.

It is ironic that as a member of the country's most vilified clan, he has shown a lot of class by not reacting unnecessarily to provocation and controversies. While we also heard that his style and personality may not be agreeable to a lot of people, the man is apparently effective. He helped in our victory and that, I guess, is too painful for many of us to accept, that is why praise for what he has accomplished did not come too easily.

It is sad that politics has penetrated almost every part of our existence. We only see what we want to see and we only think what we want to think. Again, that says a lot about us on so many levels.

Thank you very much and more power to RP sports!

Yna Yang

***

HOOPVINE: It's gonna be a blue Christmas for Purefoods' Alvin Patrimonio, who'll be spending the holidays alone, perhaps for the first time. Wife Cindy and three kids were supposed to come home from Florida last Dec. 12, but something went wrong with the flight bookings and the earliest they could make it is after the new year… Harbour Centre's Mikee Romero was both pleased and surprised that so many had applied for the coaching slot left vacant by Dindo Pumaren. The applicants came from the PBA, the PBL and the collegiate ranks… Mikee initially had his eyes on Leo Austria and Bert Flores. In the end he settled for George Gallent, an old friend.

They took the road and sailed the seas
And won a MILLION!

VISAYAS LEG
ISLAND PARADISE ADVENTURE RACE

Congratulations to the winners of the Island Paradise Adventure Race 2!

1st Runner-up
Team Vudu
Niño Abarquez
Leo Oracion

Champion:
Team Sandugo Gentech
Pastour Ermata
Carina Dayondon

2nd Runner-up
Team Conquer Nomads
Jessie Tan
Vincent Palisoc

Race Finishers

Four 20
Vance Maturana
Gabo Salvador

Nomads/Bagani
Orville "Bong" Bernabe
Joffrey Geroso

USTMC Nomads
Libert Lomuntad
Elaine Lerios

Island Souvenirs
Rico Valentin
Rodolfo Verdida

P.A.R.E. ni Juan
Ross Arayata
Pakko Mendez

D.I.F. - Ingen
Ivy Lou Medrano
Ariel Marce

Philam-Coleman
Rico Pradilla
Noelle Wenceslao

Net Factor Paw Danao
Gonzaga Louis
Thomas Redulla
Donaire Rey

Biag/Lagalag
Levi Nayahangan
Emmanuel Relos

Zhu-Pahala
Williamson Nocom
Jerik Jacoba

Island Chicken Inasal Boracay
Tammy Magro
Bogs Adornado

KIA-Sorento
Icy Mariñas
Gaby dela Merced

San Beda Adventure Team
Ludwig Alejandro Jimenez
Catherine Buelva

Sasuga
Jason Drilon
Cris Castillo

Argao
Jose Rechie de los Reyes
Ricky Peñalosa

Toyota Innova Evolution
Jimmy Hembra
John Cordero

Joint Session
Jayson Ijalo
Rafael Limarag

North-South
Angelito Manansala
Lino Basilio

The Officemates
Marvin Olingay
Lito Dimaunahan

Tarsier
Narciso Arayata
Noel Dumas

Team Iloilo City
Ralph Pacial
Keenan Cordero

Kulisaw
Leonardo Escorido, Jr.
Iris Golda Abellana

Sunyuki
Sunny de Ocampo
Yuki de Ocampo

Boysen-GA Towers "Pa Tots"
Dino Lo
Holden Ko

Chillax
Nerian Guyang
Edward Natividad

Ground Zero
Genesis
Anvie Booc

Watch out for the Island Paradise Adventure Race 2 Visayas Leg TV special on 23 in February 2006!

Co-presented by San Mig Light
In cooperation with: Merrell, Duty Free Philippines, Miss Teen Philippines and Local Government Units
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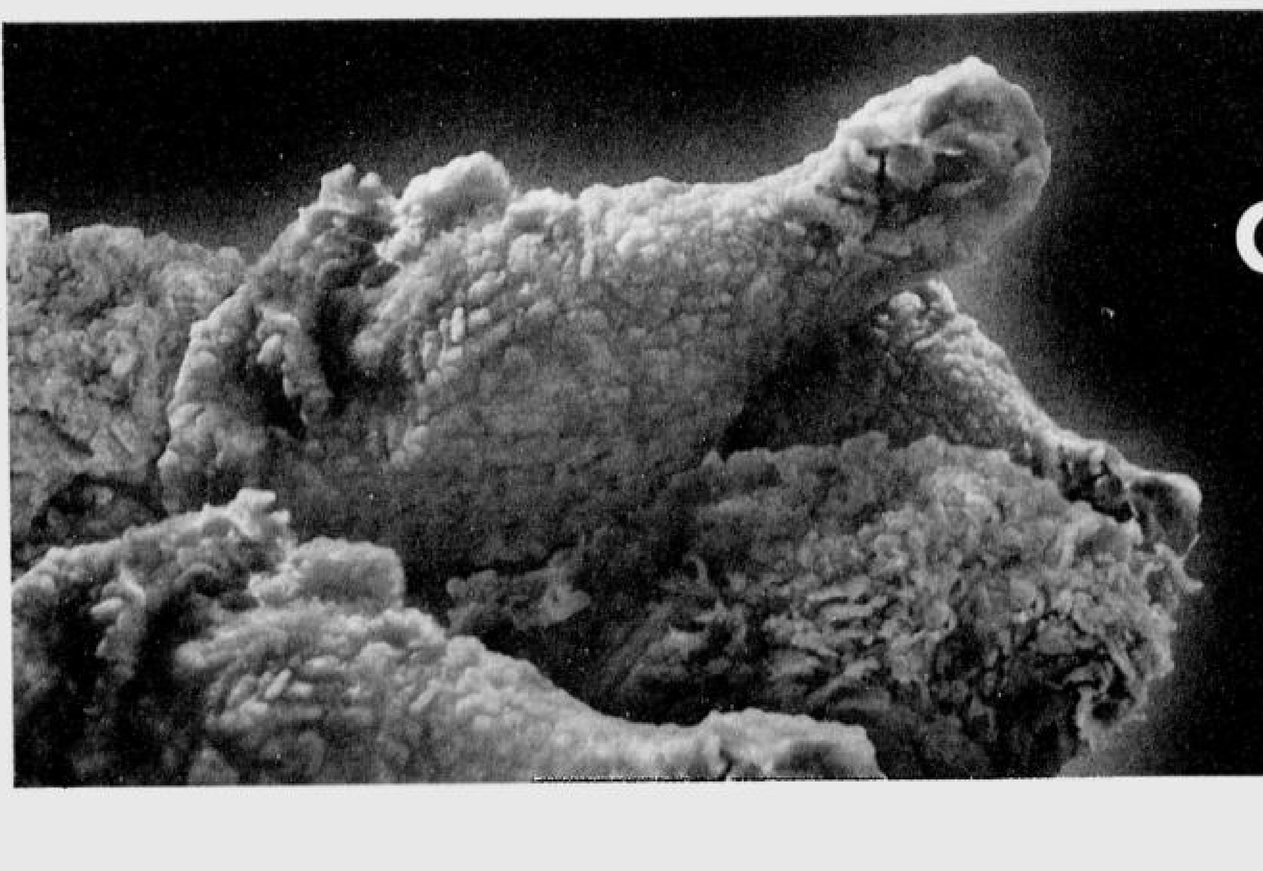

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Baguio cops, MMFF stars vie for attention

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—BONG REVILLA, Ronnie Ricketts, Assunta de Rossi, Cogie Domingo and BJ "Tolits" Forbes unwittingly tested the mettle of a special group of police officers trained to handle tourism-related crimes.

The actors were the main attractions in a motorcade on Sunday that launched the Baguio leg of the Metro Manila Film Festival.

The annual festival began screening in key cities like Baguio, Cebu and Davao in 2004. A nationalized festival is a deterrent against film piracy and is a marketing strategy to revitalize the film industry, said theater celebrity Ramon "Chinggoy" Alonzo, MMFF Baguio liaison.

A total of 47 tourist policemen—members of the Tourist Oriented Police, Community Oriented Police (Top Cop) were deployed for the first time on Session Road and Harrison Road as movie fans from La Union, Pangasinan and Bulacan motored up to witness the parade.

The Top Cop stole the limelight from the stars.

Feedback on how the policemen fared ranged from the droll to the hilarious.

"Someone called me Kotong Santa," said PO2 Joseph Martin of Camp Dangwa's re-

BAGUIO/ A2-2

ASSUNTA de Rossi during the festival parade in the Summer Capital on Sunday.

VINCENT CABREZA, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

31st METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

(Inquirer Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival opens on Dec. 25.)

'Mulawin The Movie'

STARS Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin, Dennis Trillo, Paolo Contis, Bianca King, Boy2 Quizon, Nicole Anderson and Michael de Mesa. With the special participation of Sunshine Dizon, Iza Calzado, Valerie Concepcion, Karylle and Dingdong Dantes
Directed by Dominic Zapata and Mark Reyes

The "TV version," first aired in August 2005 on GMA 7, sealed the victory for the Kapuso network in its bid for the No. 1 slot in the ratings game—thanks to a larger-than-life plotline, colorful costumes and special effects.

This was according to Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for TV Entertainment.

The program also launched the love team of Gutierrez and Locsin, who plays Aguiluz and Alwina. They would go on to headline movies.

Aguiluz and Alwina return, this time on the big screen, to "save a race of bird-man creatures from dark forces." To help them are characters from the top-rating show, "Encantadia."

"Mulawin The Movie" is competing against two other fantasy films—"Exodus" and "Enteng Kabisote 2." The producers are banking on a captive audience, based on the popularity of the TV series.

"There's also the inclusion of the 'Encantadia' cast members in the film," said Annette Gozon-Abrogar, GMA Films president. "They have a huge following as well."

"Mulawin The Movie" is co-produced by GMA Films and Regal Entertainment.

Marinel R. Cruz

Pinoys win phone filmmaking awards

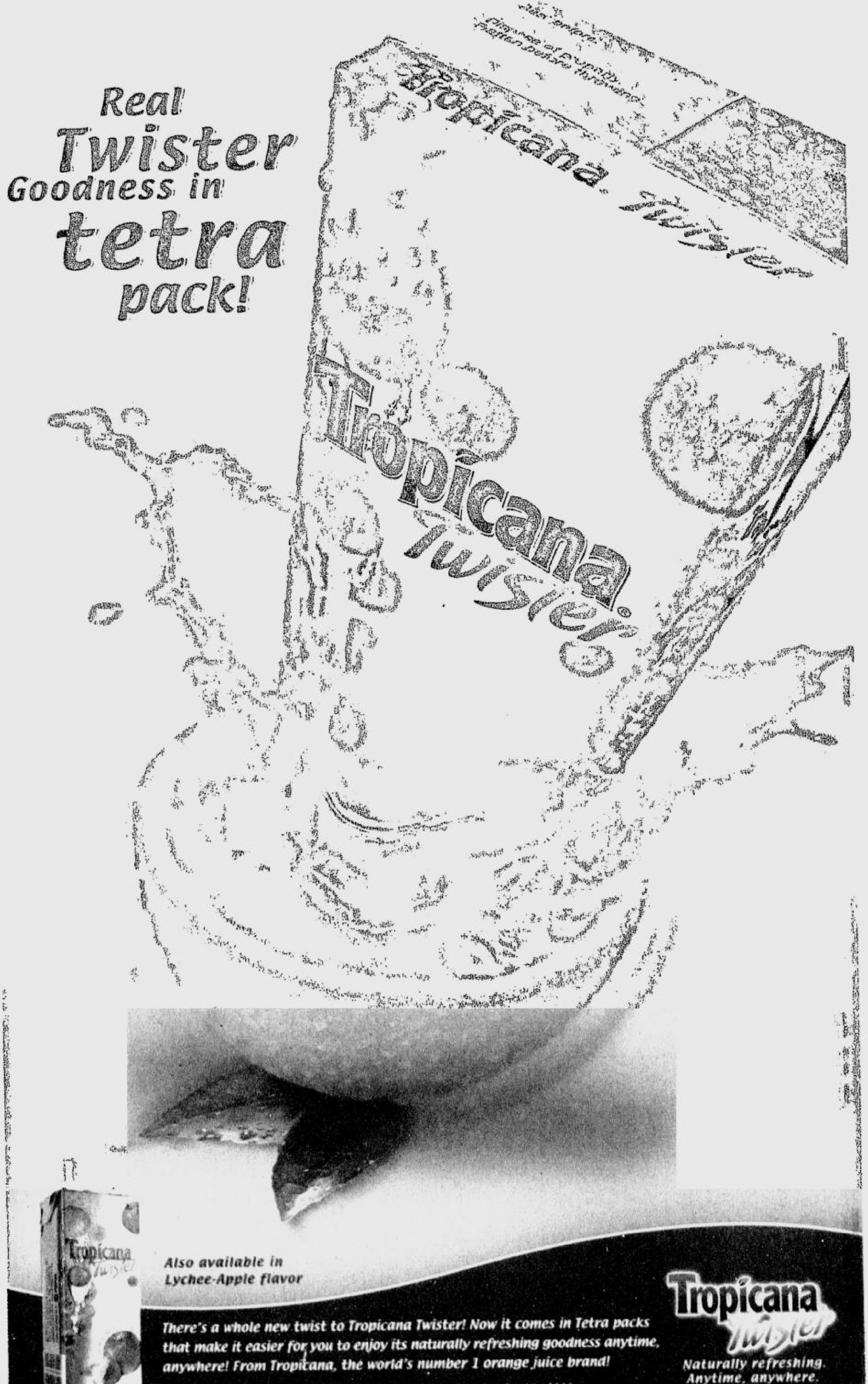
CHEER FACTOR

TAKING HER MOBILE PHONE UNDERwater seemed enough for the judges to award Filipino Janice Yu the grand prize in a recent competition for Asian amateur mobile phone filmmakers.

Another Filipino contestant, Noel Osting, won the Best Editing award for a short documentary on Filipino farm life.

Yu, who won a $10,000 cash prize, was among the six finalists in the "First Time Mobile Filmmakers Award" organized by Discovery Net-

PINOY/ A2-2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*Source: International Beverage Research Ranking on Juice Brands 2004

Baguio . . .

From page A2-1

gional mobile group.

The cops were instructed to wear Santa Claus caps with their uniforms, like policemen in Manila.

But SPO3 Vivo Hidalgo, city police spokesperson, said the Top Cop had been tasked to respond only to crimes and problems involving tourists.

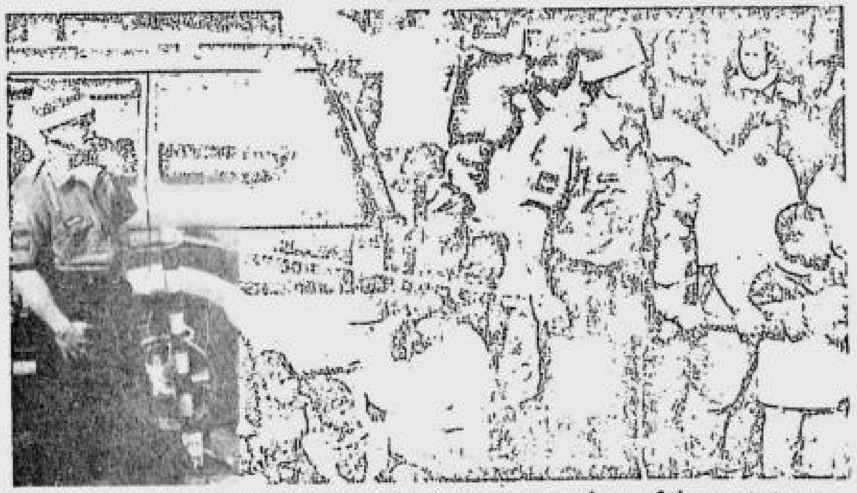
PO2 John Tamog-ong said the Santa gear was a downside to their first "outing."

"We were the butt of jokes at the precinct and now, here on the streets as well," Tamog-ong said.

Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, city police chief, said Top Cop units would soon be fielded in Boracay, Aklan and other tourist destinations.

Of the ribbing that the cops got because of the Santa gear, Hidalgo jested that, come Holy Week, they would be wearing crowns of thorns instead.

Two street vendors laughed at one tourist cop upon recognizing him as the same one that drove them away from the sidewalks every evening.



PO2 JOSEPH Martin and PO2 John Tamog-ong, members of the prototype tourism police unit, on their first assignment. They weren't too happy about the Santa caps.

VINCENT CABREZA, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Other people found the officers a little too timid. Hidalgo explained: "[Nerez] anticipated that because they are Cordillerans, who are known for being shy. But they'll get the hang of it. They are here to interact with foreign and domestic tourists. They are information officers who know, for example, where the best coffee can be bought."

Still, they were overwhelmed by the weekend visitors' sheer number. Nerez had to activate the city's junior police, teenage crowd control volunteers. But some of them were the first to shove cell phones with built-in cameras at the movie stars on the floats.

Revilla was the highest-paid actor to join the parade. He was on the float for Imus Productions' "Exodus" with child actor BJ "Tolits" Forbes.

De Rossi, wearing a red jacket, stood atop the "Mourning Girls" float beside Domingo. The film is from Teamwork Productions.

Ricketts was aboard the float for "Lagot Ka sa Kuya Ko."

Val Iglesias, bit-player-turned-stuntman-turned-actor-turned-director; hammed it up for the crowd from the float of Double Impact Productions' "Terrorist Hunter."

MMFF opens in cinemas starting Dec. 25.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City Telephone 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 11
1 (DOLBY) KING KONG PG13
2 (DOLBY) KING KONG PG13
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG PG13
4 (DOLBY) FAMILY STONE PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) KING KONG PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DTS) CHICKEN LITTLE
2 (SDDS) KING KONG
3 (DTS) THE FOG
4 (GOLD DTS) FAMILY STONE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 (GOLD DOLBY) KING KONG
6 (GOLD SDDS) KING KONG
7 (GOLD DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
8 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 BEAUTIFUL BOXER (SNEAK PREVIEW)
10 HARRY POTTER-4

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) KING KONG
2 (DOLBY) KING KONG
3 (DOLBY) FAMILY STONE
4 (DOLBY) KING KONG

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 MY LITTLE BRIDE
2 (DTS) KING KONG
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
2 (DOLBY) KING KONG
3 (DTS) KING KONG
4 MY LITTLE BRIDE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 KING KONG
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 GHOST INSIDE
2 IN HER SHOES
3 (DOLBY) THE MYTH
4 (DTS) THE FOG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 GRAND OPENING DEC. 16, KING KONG
2 CINEMA 2 OPENS ON DEC. 25, 2005 "EXODUS" & ENTENG KABISOTE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 FAMILY STONE (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) KING KONG
2 FAMILY STONE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG
4 (DOLBY) CHICKEN LITTLE

SUPER CINERAMA
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tel 7334228
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2 KING KONG
3 BEAUTIFUL BOXER (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 FAMILY STONE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 LOLLIPOP & ROSES

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1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 THE MYTH
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
2 THE FOG
3 THE MYTH

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) KING KONG
2 MY LITTLE BRIDE
3 (DTS EX) KING KONG
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 ABNORMAL BEAUTY
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG
4 (DTS) KING KONG

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 (DOLBY) KING KONG
4 (DTS) KING KONG

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 THE MYTH
2 MY LITTLE BRIDE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) KING KONG
5 THE FOG

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 WEREWOLF GINGERSNAPS-2
2 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER-4

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 KING KONG
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 MY LITTLE BRIDE

Cinemagic Pacific Mall
(Lucena City) tel. 6605271
1 THE MYTH
2 KING KONG
3
4

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 IN HER SHOES
2 THE MYTH

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) WEREWOLF GINGER SNAP-2
2 MASARAP ANG UNANG KAGAT
3 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
4 (DTS) UNDERWORLD

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) KING KONG
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 (DTS) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
5 HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MAHAROT
2 MY LITTLE BRIDE
3 THE FOG
4 KING KONG

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 THE MYTH
2 LIGAYA KATUMBAS AY BUHAY

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Walking closet, belated habit and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: WE'RE GOING TO DO A MAKEOVER of your messy apartment. What's the big change that you feel you really need?

Guest: I would be so grateful if you could build a walking closet next to my bedroom!

(Look at the walk-in closet—it's walking!)

* * *

Host: It's been a rough year, as far as natural disasters, political upheavals and terrorism are concerned. How do you keep from being negatively affected by all of these things?

Guest: I just keep telling myself, there will be something good result coming out of all here!

(—Well, if you say so!)

* * *

Host: After all of the criticism you've been getting, are you quitting your post?

Guest: No definitely, I'm not—I just want to clear it up, one thing for all!

(*Ay*, one thing for all!)

* * *

Host: Why are Filipinos often late? What can we do to change our habitual practice?

Guest: First, we have to believe that time is—money, so we are really the losers because of our belated habit.

(*Ay*, belated habit!)

* * *

Host: Be honest now—are you sometimes late?

Guest: Well, I try very hard to be on time—but there are special occasions *na male*-late *tayo*!

(—What "special occasions"?!)

* * *

Host: What are the benefits of reducing the pollution of our rivers?

Guest: Well, it's all interconnected—*malilinis 'yung buong* place because of the liver!

(Liver? We're talking *rivers* here ...)

* * *

Host: How can your client avoid going to jail in this controversial case?

Guest: He will have to become a state wetness.

(—And you're all wet, too.)

* * *

Host: What have you learned from our success in the SEA Games?

Guest: That sport is important—*dapat lahat ng* youth *dito ma*-devote *sa* game, *sa* sport!

(*Ay, ma*-devote!)

* * *

Host: What's your reaction to the charges that you are involved in the recent destabilization moves?

Guest: No, *talagang hindi ako* inbold *doon!*

(Promise, *ha?*)

* * *

Host: So, you're willing to help the government?

Guest: Yes, I'm amainable to help!

(Amainable?—Oh, amenable!)

* * *

Host: O, we have to go. Say goodbye *na*.

Co-host: So, friends, with that note, we have to go!

(Make that *on* that note, please.)

Hallmark Channel's January sizzlers

TALK about starting the New Year with a bang, the Hallmark Channel fields these screen sizzles this January 2006.

Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Vanishing Act." Cathy Davis (**Lea Thompson**), a former spy, is urged out of retirement by the National Security Agency to solve the mystery of a missing master computer file that holds the secrets of the United States defense system. Encore telecasts are at 9 p.m. on Jan. 5 and 7:10 p.m. on Jan. 14.

Jan. 8 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Now You See It, Now You Don't." Cathy employs ingenious tactics to catch the thief who's stolen the Declaration of Independence. But, when her main suspect is killed, she realizes that she's up against a villain as clever as she is. Encore: Jan. 12 at 9 p.m. and Jan. 21 at 7:10 p.m.

Jan. 15 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Till Death Do Us Part." Cathy is finally given a clearance to divulge her double life to her disbelieving husband. Encore: Jan. 19 at 9 p.m., and Jan. 28 at 7:10 p.m.

Other series highlights on Hallmark next month include "McLeod's Daughters (Mondays at 10:35 p.m.), "Family Law," (Tuesdays at 10:35 p.m., "Sue Thomas, "F.B. Eye II" (Wednesdays at 10:35 p.m.), "Judging Amy" (Thursdays at 10:35 p.m., "Doc Martin" (Fridays at 10:35 p.m.), plus popular sitcoms like "The Nanny" (M-F at 2 and 6:30 p.m.), "Who's the Boss?" (M-F at 5:30 p.m.) and the four-hour "Hercules" (Jan. 22 at 9 p.m.).

MTRCB PG-13
NOW ON ITS 4TH WEEK!
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL FRENCH NOMINEE OR 1
Featuring
DIANE KRUGER (TROY, NATIONAL TREASURE, & WICKER PARK)
MERRY CHRISTMAS
a film by Christian Carion
BENNO FURMANN · GUILLAUME CANET (LOVE ME IF YOU DARE, THE BEACH)
DANIEL BRUHL (GOODBYE LENIN) · GARY LEWIS (GANGS OF NEW YORK) · DANY BOON

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AN EPIC ADVENTURE CLASSIC FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!!!!
KING KONG IS A GIGANTIC ACHIEVEMENT HANDS DOWN THE BIGGEST SPECTACLE OF THE YEAR!!!
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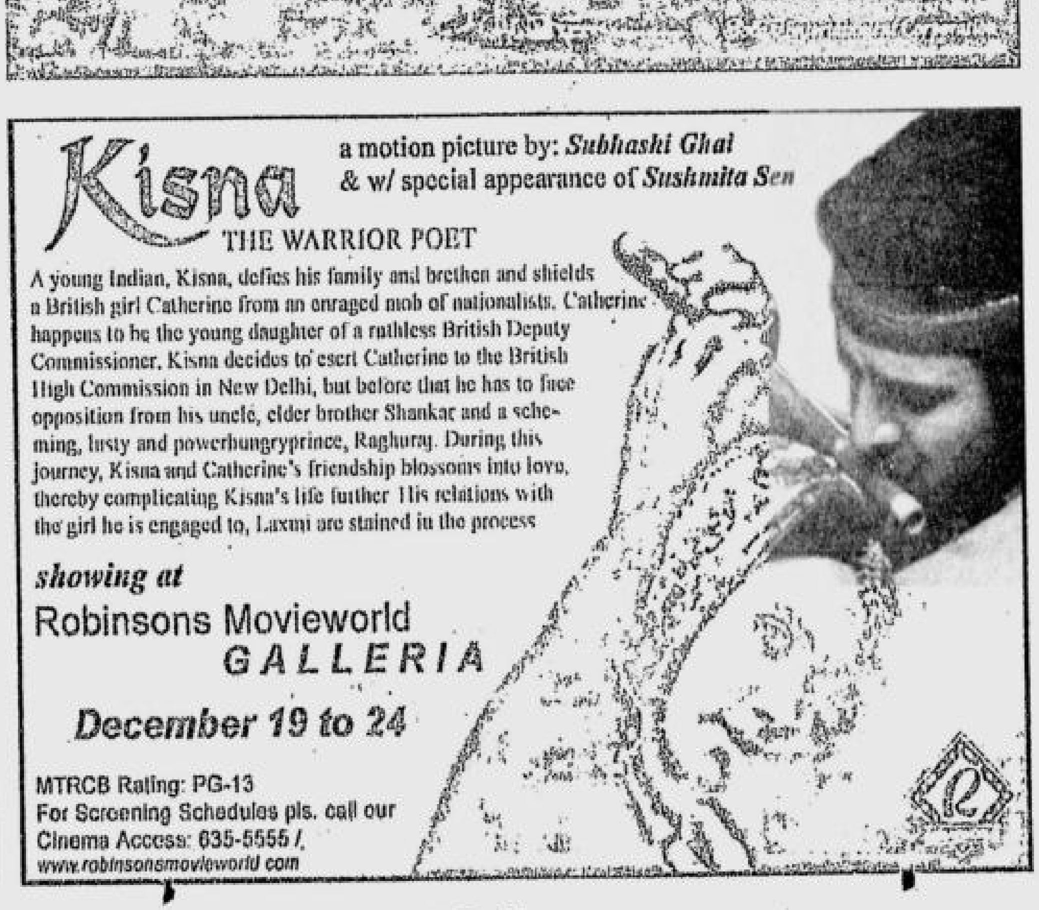
KING KONG



Kisna
THE WARRIOR POET
a motion picture by: *Subhash Ghai*
& w/ special appearance of *Sushmita Sen*

A young Indian, Kisna, defies his family and brethen and shields a British girl Catherine from an enraged mob of nationalists. Catherine happens to be the young daughter of a ruthless British Deputy Commissioner. Kisna decides to escort Catherine to the British High Commission in New Delhi, but before that he has to face opposition from his uncle, elder brother Shankar and a scheming, lusty and powerhungryprince, Raghuraj. During this journey, Kisna and Catherine's friendship blossoms into love, thereby complicating Kisna's life further. His relations with the girl he is engaged to, Laxmi are stained in the process

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Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA
December 19 to 24

MTRCB Rating: PG-13
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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

Pinoys win . . .

From page A2-1

works Asia and mobile phone manufacturer Nokia. The contest required contestants to use Nokia's N90 phone to shoot short films.

Yu's winning short film is a personal travelogue of one of the country's top dive sites, Anilao, Batangas.

"The advancement of technology is a godsend for videographers like me, who now have immediate access to equipment that, despite their small size, are packed with quality and special features and quality," Yu says on the contest's website.

In a blog written for the contest, Yu also said she had been nervous about shooting underwater using the N90. It was a "make or break" moment for her, she recalled. "I knew I had taken a gamble with the concept."

Thai Ndol Lerkwsirisuk won the Best Visualization award. *Erwin Lemuel Oliva, INQ7.net*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Nasty Edie is the odd 'Housewife' out

LOS ANGELES—THE DRAMA ON Wisteria Lane is unending, especially when it comes to awards nominations.

"Desperate Housewives" actress Nicollette Sheridan was left out when Tuesday's Golden Globe bids were announced, although castmates Teri Hatcher, Marcia Cross, Felicity Huffman and Eva Longoria all received nominations.

Again, again

The scenario was reminiscent of another "Housewives" omission, when Longoria failed to get either a Globe or Emmy Award nomination after the show made its hit debut last season.

In the previous Golden Globe and Emmy go-around, Cross, Hatcher and Huffman all received Best Actress bids, while Sheridan was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for the Globes. Huffman won the Emmy, with the Globe trophy going to Hatcher.

In the Globes' odd grouping of entries, Sheridan faced tough competition. While the four "Desperate Housewives" leads competed for Best Actress in a Musical or Comedy, Sheridan vied for Best Supporting Actress in a broader category that includes series, miniseries and movies.

She was squeezed out by nominees Candice Bergen of "Boston Legal"; Camryn Manheim, "Elvis"; Sandra Oh, "Grey's Anatomy"; Elizabeth Perkins, "Weeds" and Joanne Woodward, "Empire Falls."

It is up to each actress to decide if they want to compete in the lead or supporting category, a spokesperson for the show said Tuesday. Also overlooked in the supporting category was series newcomer Alfre Woodard.

NICOLLETTE Sheridan

A call seeking comment from Sheridan, who plays sexy schemer Edie, was not immediately returned Tuesday. Others connected with the show accentuated the positive, which included a Best Series bid from the journalists' organization in charge of the Globes.

"What a great ending to a magical year!" Longoria said in a statement. "The nomination is made all the more sweet by the fact that I'm in the company of my dear friends and co-stars."

Great expectations

"Obviously we are excited and thrilled and we so appreciate the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's continued appreciation of our show," series creator and executive producer Marc Cherry said in a statement. "We're looking forward to a great party."

The Golden Globes ceremony is Jan. 16.

"Housewives" quickly became a sensation when it arrived in 2004 and was the top-rated show in its last airing. *AP*

RUMORS? They come with the territory, says Pops Fernandez. RYAN LIM

Yes, Pops is dating Jomari

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

POPS FERNANDEZ IS HAVING A BALL.

She said so herself, insisting "I enjoy my life now more than ever ... because I have more control [over it]."

The singer-actress has become a producer as well. She staged the recent back-to-back show of her friends Jon Santos and John Lapus, and the concert of ex-husband Martin Nievera. She is also running two Pipay stores.

INQUIRER Entertainment had a chat with her backstage during the recent PDI anniversary bash. She said quite a mouthful about her current roles and state of independence, Martin, rumored steady date Jomari Yllana, and the two most important men in her life—sons Robin and Ram.

What have you been busy with lately?

I've been in and out of the country. I also produced the Jon Santos-John Lapus show [at Zirkho]—that was super fun. I also produced Martin's show in Ratsky's—on his request. Christmas is just around the corner and all I want to do now is not worry about anything.

What is it like as producer?

It's interesting [being] on the other side of the fence. I'm learning a lot. As an artist, I can be demanding. Now I understand a producer's point of view. Still, as an artist myself, I feel for the performers. I try to give in to my artists, as much as possible.

There was a rumor that you got back together with Martin?

That's an undying rumor! People are always wishing and praying that we reunite. But we're both happy. I think it's wonderful that we've learned to be good friends. There's constant adjustment—which is natural. Bottom line is, we choose to be friends because we both love our kids, Robin and Ram, very much.

How are the boys?

Robin plays the guitar and piano, sings and serves as musical director for church. Ram is into drawing. His dream is to be a cartoonist for DreamWorks.

There's this other rumor about Jomari Yllana?

There is always a rumor about me and the people I hang out with.

Did Jomari watch the Zirkoh show?

He guested in it. We asked friends to do walk-ons; that was our gimmick. [Jomari's brother] Anjo Yllana was also a guest, like Ogie Alcasid and Allan K. Show biz friends watched the show, like Daboy [Rudy Fernandez] and *Ate* Vi [Vilma Santos].

People say you and Jom look good together.

I don't know what to make of that. Are they excited or just curious?

But what's the latest on Jomari? Are you friends?

Yah, we're closer. I had never been friends with him—I used to see him in show biz gatherings and TV guestings—until last year. I asked a favor and he was nice enough to oblige.

Are you seeing each other now?

We've been going out. That's it.

How do you handle rumors?

I look at it as part of the business.

You seem more relaxed now, in fact.

I still hear a lot of things but I'm no longer as sensitive as I used to be. I take everything in stride now. I have more control of my life.

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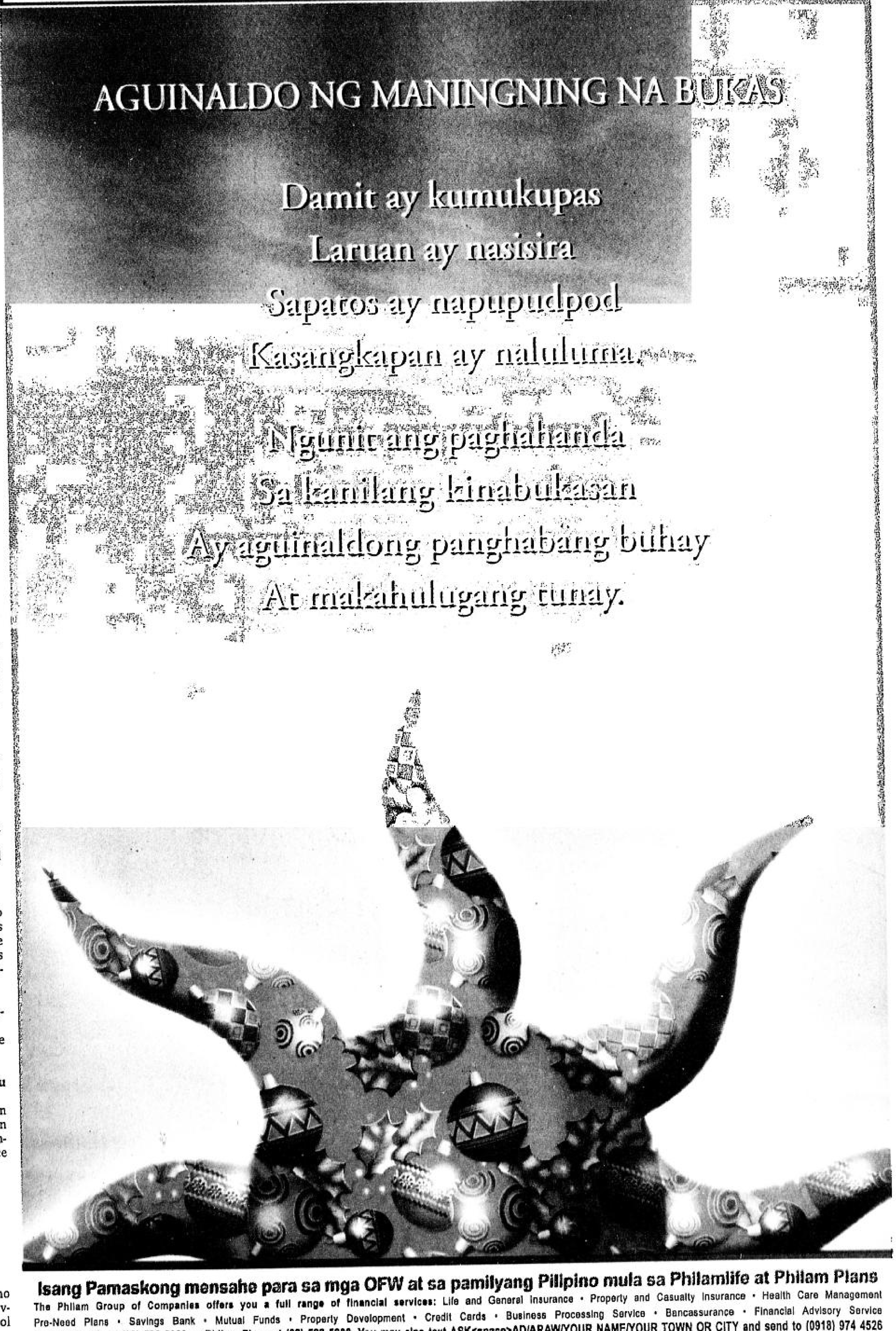

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MEGAMALL
1 KING KONG 12:00FS/12:30MF/04:10 07:20LFS/07:50LMF/11:00END

CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 KING KONG 01:20FS/01:40MF/05:05 08:15LFS/08:30LMF/11:35END
2 KING KONG 11:00FS/11:15MF/02:40/06:05 09:13LFS/09:30LMF/12:35END
3 KING KONG 10:35FS/10:45MF/02:10/05:35 08:43LFS/09:00LMF/12:05END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
6 THE FAMILY STONE
7 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8 MERRY CHRISTMAS
9 THE FOG
10 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
11 KING KONG
12 THE MAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 MERRY CHRISTMAS
8 IN HER SHOES
9 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
10 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 FAMILY TONE
4 KING KONG

SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 FAMILY STONE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 FAMILY STONE
2 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 HARI NG SABLAY
6 THE FOG
7 KING KONG
8 KING KONG
9 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
10 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
11 CHICKEN LITTLE
12 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM CITY [illegible]THMALL
1 KING KONG
2 FAMILY STONE
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
7 THE MAN
8 THE FOG
9 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
10 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 FAMILY STONE
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG

SM CITY [illegible] EDSA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 FAMILY STONE
4 MERRY CHRISTMAS
5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
6 THE FOG
7 KING KONG
8 BEAUTIFUL BOXERS

SM CITY [illegible]LA
1 FAMILY STONE
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 THE FOG
6 KING KONG
7 BEAUTIFUL BOXERS
8 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
9 KING KONG
10 KING KONG
11 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12 THE MAN

SM SAN LAZARO
1 FAMILY STONE
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
6 THE FOG

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 HARI NG SABLAY
5 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIR

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 KING KONG

SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE FOG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

SM CITY BACOOR
1 THE MAN
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 FAMILY STONE
8 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

SM CITY MARILAO
1 KING KONG
2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 KING KONG

SM CITY [illegible]INAS
1 KING KONG
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG

SM [illegible]ENA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM CITY [illegible]
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE FOG
6 THE MYTH
7 KING KONG
8 KING KONG

SM [illegible]
1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
2 RESERVED
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 THE FOG
7 RESERVED
8 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS

SM [illegible]
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
4 THE FOG
5 KING KONG
6 KING KONG

SM CITY [illegible]
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE MYTH
4 KING KONG

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JUST LIKE HEAVEN PG13 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00,10:00
KING KONG PG13 12:50,4:30,8:10
KING KONG PG13 1:50,5:30,9:10
IN HER SHOES PG13 1:30,4:10,6:50,9:30
KING KONG PG13 2:50,6:30,10:10
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③ KING KONG MTRBC.PG-13 2:30, 6.15, 10:00 PM
② KING KONG MTRCB. PG-13 1:30, 5:15, 9:00 PM
④ FAMILY STONE MTRCB: PG-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30,10:00
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P140 HARRY POTTER
P150 KING KONG
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KING KONG 12:00 / 2:25 / 3:35 / 6:00 / 7:10 / 9:35
FAMILY STONE 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
BEAUTIFUL BOXER 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
JUST LIKE HEAVEN 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
...MAXIMO OLIVEROS 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
KING KONG 1:50 / 5:25 / 9:00
HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET 12:30/ 3:30 / 6:30 / 9:30
THE FOG 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40
IN HER SHOES 6:50 / 9:30
CHICKEN LITTLE 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30
MERRY CHRISTMAS 6:40 / 9:30
ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ KING KONG 12:50 / 4:25 / 8:00
❷ BEAUTIFUL BOXER 12:10 / 2:50 / 5:30 / 8:10
❸ IN HER SHOES 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
❹ HARI NG SABLAY 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00
❺ THE MYTH 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:20
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ROUNDUP

Unremarkable Kong

LOS ANGELES — "King Kong" was less of a box-office brute than Hollywood expected, taking in $50.15 million in its first weekend, a sturdy start but unremarkable by Hollywood blockbuster standards.

Hollywood analysts expected "King Kong" to have a debut weekend at least in the $60 million range. Still, it led Hollywood to a solid weekend, with the top 12 movies grossing $121.2 million, up 22 percent from the same weekend last year.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official box office tracker: 1) "King Kong," $50.15M; 2) "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," $31.2M; 3) "The Family Stone," $12.7M; 4) "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," $5.9M; 5) "Syriana," $5.5M; 6) "Walk the Line," $3.6M; 7) "Yours, Mine & Ours," $3.4M; 8) "Brokeback Mountain," $2.4M; 9) 'Just Friends," $1.95M; 10) "Aeon Flux," $1.7M. AP

Museum to close

GAS CITY, Indiana—A museum chronicling the short life of "Rebel Without a Cause" star James Dean will close Dec. 31.

Owner David Loehr moved the James Dean Gallery less than two years ago to Gas City from Fairmount, Indiana, where Dean attended high school. Although attendance has increased, it hasn't been enough to match the cost of maintaining the temperature-controlled building, Loehr said Monday.

Dean, who was born in Marion, Indiana, in 1931, was killed in a car crash in Cholame, California, in 1955 at age 24.

The James Dean Gallery contains a dozen pieces of wardrobe worn by Dean in his three major films, school papers, paintings by Dean, and original movie posters, books and magazines. *AP*

Pamela edited out

LOS ANGELES—Pamela Anderson and pole dancing proved too hot for NBC, which dropped a number featuring the actress in a sexy big-screen video from an Elton John television special.

"Elton John: The Red Piano," a Las Vegas extravaganza taped at Caesars Palace, aired Monday night without the segment in which John sang "The Bitch is Back" while an oversized screen behind him displayed a scantily clad Anderson. The actress moved suggestively around a dance pole in the number, which was included in preview copies sent out to critics.

"We believed the content was not appropriate for 8 p.m.-7 central time and decided to pull the song from the special," NBC said in a statement Tuesday. *AP*

Super smile

Tom Welling, the boy with a super smile and other powers, is Charlie Baker in "Cheaper by the Dozen 2." In the movie, Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt as Mr. & Mrs. Tom Baker take their 12 offspring one last time on a summer vacation before the older kids Charlie, Lorraine (Hilary Duff) and Nora (Piper Perabo) fly the coop.

Charlie finds a vacation neighbor, Anne (Jamie King), more than a diversion.

Following his debut in "Smalleville" as the teenage Clark Kent, Wellong was named one of People Magazine's Breakthrough Stars of 2001.

The movie opens worldwide in January.

Enchanted fireworks

Enchanted Kingdom's Spettacolo Pirotecnico (Fireworks of Art) will again delight the theme park's visitors on Dec. 25 and 26, and Jan. 1. Spettacolo is an-18-minute spectacle of lasers, computerized lighting and pyrotechnics choreographed to dance to an extended orchestration of "Carol of the Bells." The park is located in Santa Rosa, Laguna. 30 km south of Makati.

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GALLERIA [illegible]

1 KING KONG • THX
1:40 5:20 9:00

2 KING KONG
2:10 5:50 9:30

3 THE FAMILY STONE Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 KING KONG
12:40 4:20 8:00

5 KING KONG
11:00 2:40 6:20 10:00

6 KING KONG
12:10 3:50

7 IN HER SHOES
1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50

8 BEUTIFUL BOXER Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

9 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

10 KISNA 12:40 3:50
BARSAAT 7:05 9:50

ERMITA [illegible]

1 KING KONG 1:50 5:20 8:50

2 BEAUTIFUL BOXER Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

4 KING KONG
11:20 2:50 6:20 9:50

5 KING KONG
11:20 2:50 6:20 9:50

6 KING KONG
12:20 3:50 7:20

7 THE FAMILY STONE Sneak Preview
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

2 KING KONG
10:25 2:10 5:50 9:40

3 KING KONG
2:10 5:55 9:40

4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

5 THE FAMILY STONE Sneak Preview
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

6 KING KONG
5:15 9:00

7 KING KONG
1:30 5:15 9:00

8 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

NOVALICHES [illegible]

1 BEAUTIFUL BOXER Sneak Preview
2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 THE FOG
6 THE FAMILY STONE Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER [illegible]

1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE FAMILY STONE Sneak Preview
4 BEUTIFUL BOXER Sneak Preview

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2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 IN HER SHOES
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 KING KONG

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1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET OF FIRE
4 THE FOG

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 KING KONG
2 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 KING KONG
4 THE FOG

ANGELES [illegible]

1 KING KONG
2 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 THE FOG
4 KING KONG

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1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 IN HER SHOES
4 THE FOG

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1 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 THE FOG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 KING KONG

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1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
5 CHICKEN LITTLE
6 THE MYTH

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1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 THE MYTH
5 KING KONG

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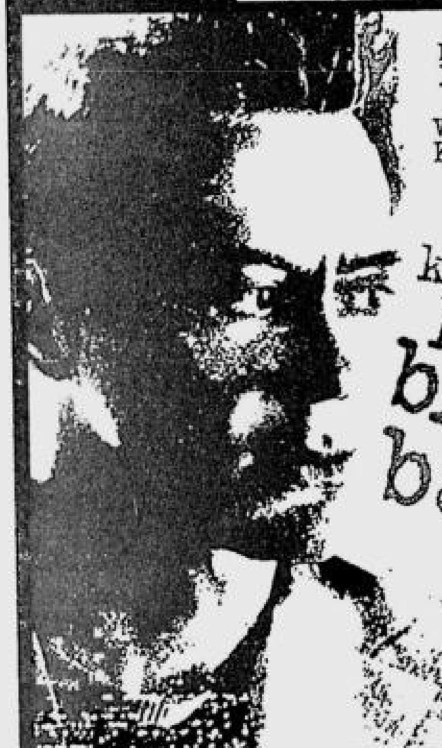
Cinema	Screen	Movie	Schedule
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	THE FAMILY STONE	
	2	KINGKONG	
	3	KINGKONG	
	4	AN UNFINISHED LIFE	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	KINGKONG	
	2	KINGKONG	
	3 THX	KINGKONG	1 55, 5 35, 9 15 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	KISS KISS BANG BANG	
	5	CHICKEN LITTLE	
	6	KINGKONG	
	7	IN HER SHOES	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	THE FAMILY STONE	12 55, 3 20, 5 45, 8 10
	2	KINGKONG	1 40, 5 20, 9 00
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	KINGKONG	1 00, 4 45, 8 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	KINGKONG	2 00, 5 45, 9 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	JUST LIKE HEAVEN	1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	THE FAMILY STONE	1 40, 4 05, 6 30, 8 55, 11 20 GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	KINGKONG	3 00, 6 45, 10 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	KINGKONG	
	2	THE FAMILY STONE	
	3	BEAUTIFUL BOXER	
	4	KINGKONG	
	5	KINGKONG	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	KINGKONG	
	2	KINGKONG	
	3	KINGKONG	
	4	JUST LIKE HEAVEN	



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December 4, 11, 18 and 25
7 pm at the Playzone

Market! Market! Simbang Gabi
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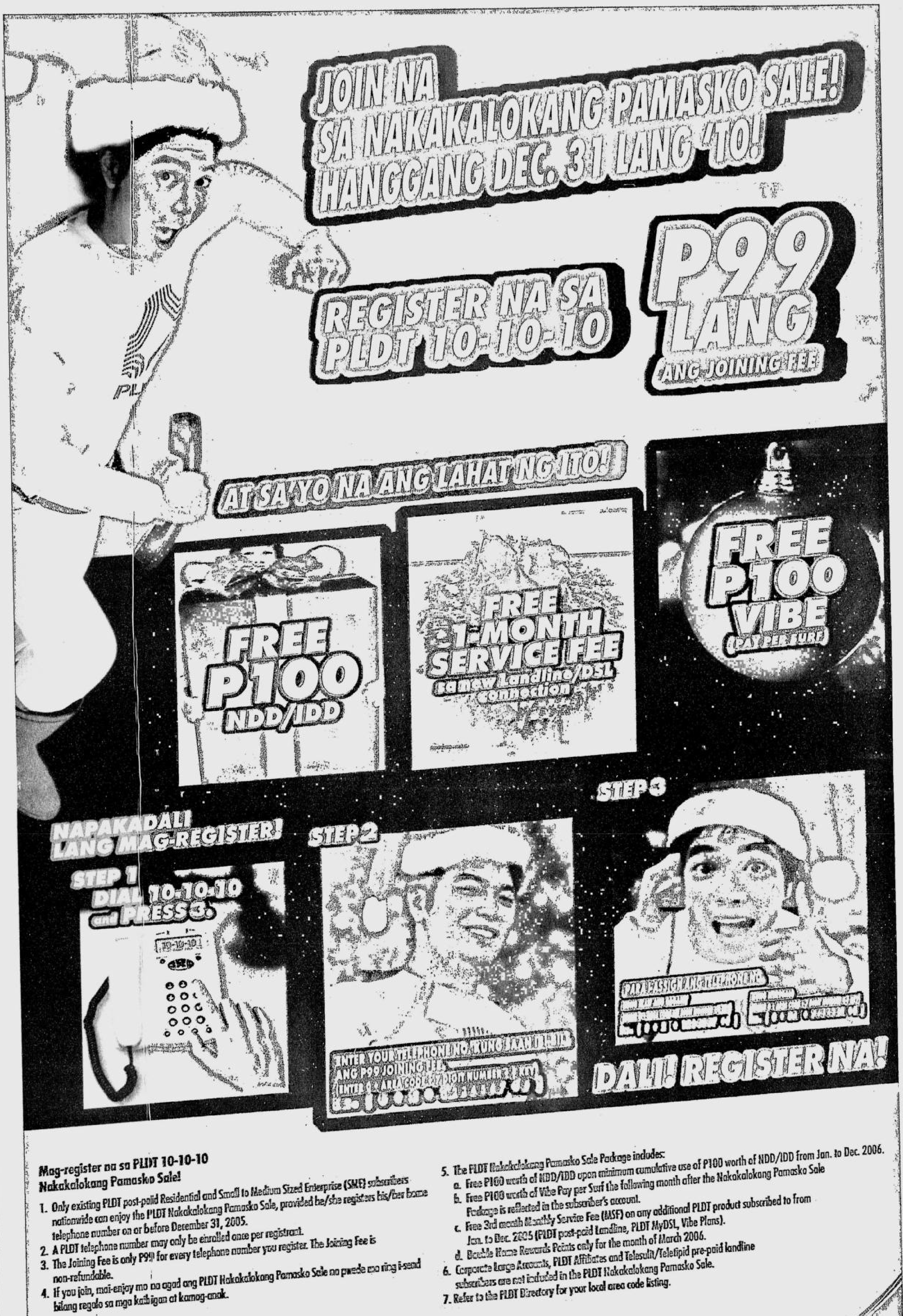
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Gov't to install new board in Maynilad

84% equity in beleaguered utility to be sold in 1st quarter

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PRIVATIZATION COUNCIL WILL INSTALL A NEW board in Maynilad Water Services Inc. to prepare for the sale of the government's right to subscribe to 84 percent of the beleaguered water concessionaire by the first quarter of 2006.

"Under the debt and capital restructuring agreement (among stockholders), the government has the right to assign its rights, so we're proceeding with the privatization," Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson Jr. said yesterday.

The new 12-member board, about half of which will consist of government nominees, will then appoint a financial adviser to conduct the valuation of Maynilad prior to the sale of the government's obligation or right to subscribe to the utility.

Two of the remaining board members will be independent directors while four will represent the private sector.

Maynilad is among the three big-ticket items that the government plans to bid out in the first quarter of next year.

By privatizing Maynilad, the government seeks to avoid paying $53.7 million in combined financial assistance and subscription fees.

The 84-percent stake used to be controlled by the Lopez-owned Benpres Holdings Corp. was transferred to the government based on a court-approved rehabilitation plan.

Under the debt and capital restructuring agreement, government-owned MWSS will have to again borrow $31 million for Maynilad expenses either from the World Bank or a government financial institution. After the loan, Maynilad will only begin to remit payments to MWSS starting 2013, after all debts to other creditors had been paid.

TRIM WORKFORCE BY 80%

Gov't raising ₱2B for PNR rehab

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE STATE-OWNED NATIONAL Development Co. will raise P2 billion in five-year money to finance the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways and allow the debt-saddled agency to slash about 80 percent of its workforce, the head of the PNR said.

PNR general manager Jose Sarasola II said the investment arm of the trade department had agreed to float P2 billion worth of five-year zero coupon bonds by January 2006 to help the rail agency implement a widespread "corporate reengineering."

Once PNR's financial problems have been fixed as a result of a leaner and more efficient organization, Sarasola said the agency would privatize the operations of its commuter line.

Sarasola said the PNR would use half of the proceeds of the NDC bond issue or about P1 billion to clear the right-of-way linking the South Manila commuter line with the North Luzon Railway. PNR tracks are lined with thousands of squatters that have to be relocated.

The other half of the proceeds will be used to settle unpaid dues with the Government Service Insurance System to allow PNR to retire 80 percent of its work force.

The PNR owes about P1 billion to the GSIS for its employees' contribution that the railway agency had been unable to pay for several years due to a lack of funds.

"We are planning to bring down our size to the barest essential," Sarasola said in an interview. "We will retire 1,200 out of our 1,500 employees."

The PNR has signed a memorandum of agreement with the NDC on the bond issue. He said the loan that the PNR, in effect, would get from the NDC, would be backed by its real estate assets.

"We will use our 8.2-hectare property in Tutuban as a collateral to the NDC's bond issue," Sarasola said.

The PNR said it must sell the prop-

GOV'T/ B3

Success of Roro plan depends on resolving conflicting priorities

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CONCEPTUALIZED what is now known as the Strong Republic Nautical Highway, it knew its weak fiscal position would make it unable to fund the necessary infrastructure.

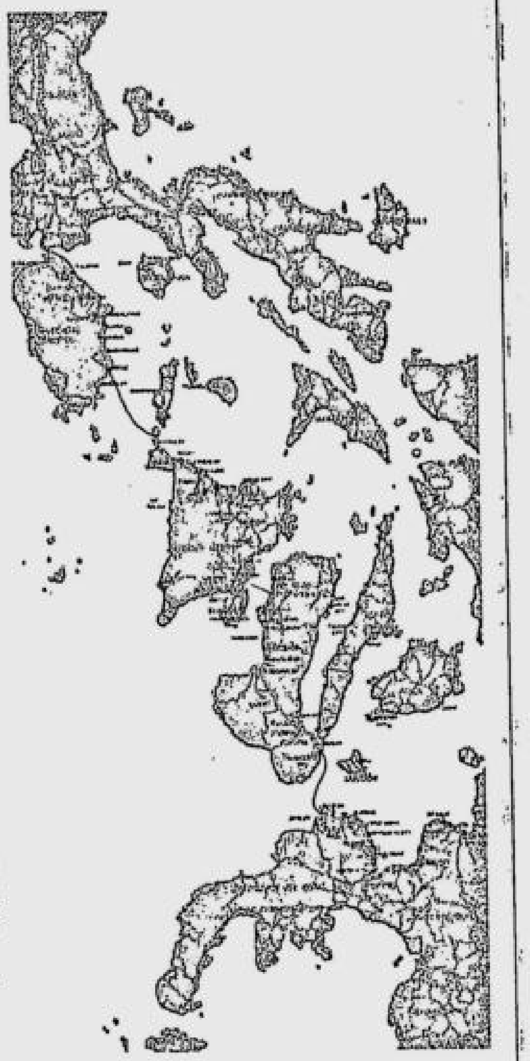
Therefore, instead of building the ports and buying roll-on, roll-off (Roro) ships, it tapped the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to provide funding to the private sector and local government units on easy terms.

During a recent press conference, DBP president and CEO Reynaldo G. David revealed that the bank had already lent out some P1.8 billion in cheap loans to 12 borrowers for the "modernization and upgrading of vessels, port development and maritime education projects."

"There are presently six projects in the pipeline amounting to P330 million while a total of P312 million has been budgeted for six prospective projects," he said.

All told, the bank has allocated P6.7 billion for 250 projects under the program, which includes funding for cold storage and grains facilities along the length of the nautical highway to help in the transport of perishable goods.

This good news, however, is only half the picture.



NAUTICAL highway route

Clashing philosophies

In an interview last week, DBP senior vice president Marietto A. Enecio said that the bank turns away many borrowers under the Roro program due to flaws in the proponents' business plans.

"Our main criteria is cash flow," he said, explaining that the bank—far from simply doling out money—wants to be assured that the borrower will be able to repay the loan.

He said the borrower must also be able to present collateral of good quality to

RORO/ B3

INDICATORS

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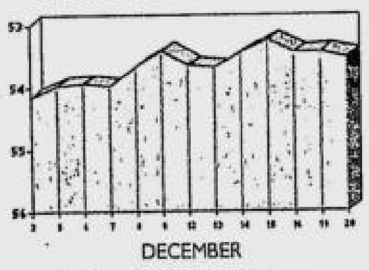

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₱53.53 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 20, 2005

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As of 5 p.m., Dec. 20, 2005

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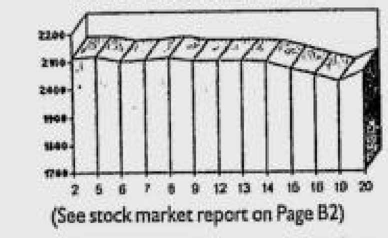
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 20, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

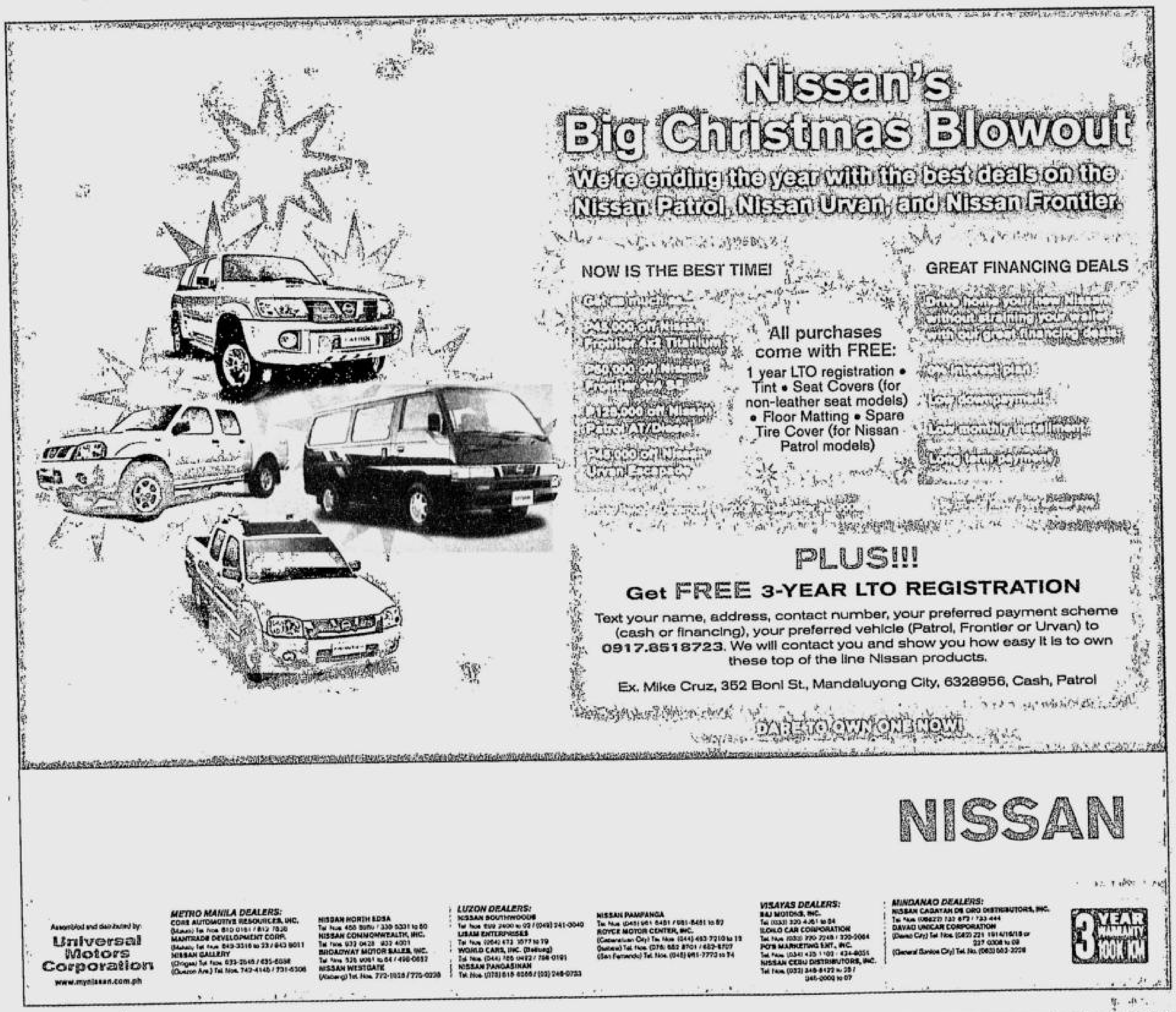
Shares close sharply higher

SHARES closed sharply higher yesterday on sentiment that stocks had fallen too far in five sessions of losses, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index gained 38.08 points, or 1.9 percent, to 2,062.78, after shedding 3.6 percent in the past five sessions, including Monday's 1.1 percent loss.

"The market was close to oversold levels already after five straight sessions of decline. We felt that the drop was an opportunity to accumulate," said BPI Securities senior manager Roberto Cano.

SHARES/ B2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Ford investing ₱1B to put up flexible engine plant in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORD MOTOR CO. YESTERDAY SAID IT WAS investing P1.1 billion in its Sta. Rosa plant in Laguna to manufacture engines that can run on bio-ethanol.

FMC corporate vice president Peter Daniel said in a press briefing the investment would mean an extension of the existing facility and bringing in additional capital equipment.

"We expect to have the (engine factory) up and running by the end of next year, which means production would start by then," Daniel said.

Daniel, who is also president of Ford Asia Pacific and Africa, explained that Ford Motor Philippines Co. would turn out 100,000 units of the so-called flex-fuel engines in the next five years valued at about $100 million.

"This would be Ford's first such facility not only in the Philippines but in the entire Asian region," he said.

Daniel added that about 80 percent of the output would be for export to the region and the rest would be sold in the local market.

"We expect that this new investment would take the Philippine automotive industry to its next level of development by establishing its leadership in flexible fuel technology in the region," he said.

"With this investment, Ford intends to build the Philippines as its (Southeast Asian) center of excellence in flexible fuel technology, which is part of Ford's global vision on innovation," he added.

Ford Philippines Group president Henry Co said the company planned to outfit its Focus sedans with the flex-fuel engines which would run on gasoline with a blend of at least 20 percent ethanol.

"The common gasoline engines can also run on bio-ethanol but in smaller amounts of ethanol," Co explained.

Daniel said the new engines would also be used in other Ford vehicles which would address the projected increase in regional demand for vehicles that run on alternative fuels.

CO

He said the country was considered the best location for the engine factory because of the company's "good relations with the government, the incentives laid out in the Automotive Export Program—of which Ford is so far the only participant—and the quality of the local workforce.

By the end of the year, the officials said FMPC would have exported a cumulative 40,000 completely built vehicles valued at about $500 million.

The firm has taken steps to double the capacity of its assembly plant in Laguna to 36,000 units a year.

The new investment would provide jobs to 90 direct hires, in addition to the 1,250 jobs created since Ford started its Philippine operations.

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Receiver wants Platinum settlement fund doubled

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COURT-APPOINTED receiver of Platinum Plans Philippines Inc. is urging the pre-need firm to beef up its proposed settlement fund to P150 million to pay education plans that have matured.

Platinum has an estimated 37,000 plan holders.

In his recommendation filed with Branch 61 of the Makati RTC last Dec. 19, rehabilitation receiver Antonio Tupaz said the fund size should be doubled from P75 million to protect the interest of plan holders and creditors.

Tupaz said the fund should be used to pay 100 percent of the gross contract price (GCP) of an educational plan, less government taxes, or the mandated termination value prescribed in the contract for those terminating their plans whether they have matured or not.

He also proposed that once the P150 million was paid out, the rehabilitation receiver should be given the flexibility to use additional P100 million to further pay plan holders.

Tupaz also said all real estate assets of Platinum be placed in trust with a bank and securitized for distribution, payment or settlement for all stakeholders.

He also proposed that all assets of Platinum be placed under one asset pool under his supervision as a receiver since Platinum was exiting from the pre-need industry under its rehabilitation plan. This means it will no longer require a pre-need trust fund under the oversight of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

He also suggested to amend the formula used in returning plan holders' investments, as follows:

- Plan holders will be paid up to 200 percent of their original GCP less government taxes;
- Those who choose to convert their plans into equity will be allowed to convert at 400 percent of their original GCP less government taxes.

In terms of its business plan, Tupaz said Platinum should be allowed to continue operating as a pre-need company only if it would be able to find a white knight who will infuse the necessary fresh capital into the company to comply with SEC requirements.

Tupaz noted that since the SEC did not renew Platinum's license to sell plans, the company could venture into a new business to keep its sales force and distribution network active. This will also enable the company to meet its obligations to creditors and plan holders.

Among its options include going into mass marketing of products such as credit cards, personal loans, health-related medical programs using its network of 34 branches; participating in the sale of nonperforming assets to overseas Filipino workers, and acting as a licensed agent for other pre-need firms, life and non-life insurance companies.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 20, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32	33	32	33	341,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53.5	55	53.5	54.5	794,100
China Banking Corp.	600	600	600	600	150
Citystate Savings Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.61	1,510,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	54.5	56	54.5	56	383,200
International Exch. Bank	21.25	21.25	21	21	247,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	33	32	33	419,900
Philippine National Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	100
Security Bank Corp.	32	32	32	32	31,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	110,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3110	3110	3110	3110	110
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	140	140	140	140	2,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2105	2080	2105	1,040
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13	13	13	3,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.89	0.9	1,240,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	710	720	710	715	37,700
Ipeople Inc.	2.9	3	2.9	3	49,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	763,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1760	1800	1760	1800	78,630
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.014	0.014	161,800,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15	15	15	15	9,100
Manila Electric Co. B	21.5	21.75	20.5	21.75	1,269,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.2	11,393,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.3	4.15	4.3	5,205,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	145,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.3	1,088,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.71	0.76	0.71	0.74	4,930,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.71	0.85	0.71	0.85	220,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	1,688,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	5,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	84,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21.75	22	21.75	22	7,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41	41.5	41	41.5	625,000
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	150,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64	138,300
San Miguel Corp. B	87.5	87.5	82.5	87	109,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	670,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	305	312.5	300	300	468,300
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.8	854,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.06	2.06	294,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	700,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	70,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	30,000
Boulevard Holdings, Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	1,500,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	4,437,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.94	60,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	2,570,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	63,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	48	45	48	743,500
Ionics Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.25	2,638,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.46	1.5	1.46	1.5	80,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.2	1.22	7,807,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3,760,000
Paxys Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.8	767,000
SM Investments Corp.	244	244	239	240	152,500
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	5,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.96	3,560,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	400,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	12.5	13	12.5	12.75	368,600
DMCI Holdings Inc- Pref.	1365	1370	1365	1370	136,950
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.2	9.4	9.2	9.4	39,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.5	9.7	9.5	9.6	4,453,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.02	2.04	2	2	265,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	2,200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	1,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	2,541,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	610,000
City & Land Developers	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	71,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,380,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	90,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.7	8	7.7	7.8	7,855,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co., Inc. A	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	32,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	12,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	2,730,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	2,720,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	40,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.029	62,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	30,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.26	1.32	1.26	1.32	882,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.64	3,272,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	5,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	110,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	41,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	370,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	3,848,300	103,075,975.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	227,214,280	805,798,750.00
PRO	20,815,000	111,167,190.00
Mining	175,221,000	10,998,690.00
OIL	32,021,000	494,950.00
GRAND TOTALS :	459,119,580	1,031,535,555.00
Bank & Fin Svc	610.61	UP 13.22
Comm'l & Ind'l	3,220.80	UP 61.78
PRO	826.09	UP 14.96
Mining	2,768.19	UP 62.70
OIL	2.84	UP 0.08

NO. OF ADVANCES: 47, NO. OF DECLINES: 16, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 39, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 102, NO. OF TRADES: 2,521

Shares close . . .

From page B1

Providing a big boost to the market were blue chips PLDT, which rose 3.2 percent to P1,800 following the 0.9-percent advance in the company's American Depositary Receipts in New York Monday. San Miguel-B rose 5.5 percent to P87 and BPI climbed 1.9 percent to P54.50.

All sectoral indicators advanced. Gainers led decliners 47 to 16, while 39 stocks were unchanged.

Total volume stood at 459.1 million shares valued at P1.03 billion from Monday's 334.5 million shares valued at P1.2 billion.

Foreign investors were net sellers, buying P509.7 million worth of shares and selling P539.7 million of shares.

Meralco-B rose 1.2 percent to P21.75, while its affiliate First Holdings gained 3.2 percent to P48. The two stocks rebounded from heavy selling Monday that was triggered by an INQUIRER report that the government is considering taking over Meralco, the country's largest power distributor, to settle P42 billion owed by the utility to the government. Meralco has denied it owed such an amount to the government.

Cano said the market could still enjoy some upside during the next session.

"I think it's more dependent on the type of news that will come out (today), but we're leaning more towards a further uptick in the market," he said. *AP*

DISCLOSURES

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. appointed on Dec. 9 Susanne Y. Santos as member of the audit committee. It also created a public auction committee composed of Ma. Clara A. Camacho, chair, and the following members: Francisco S. Magsajo Jr., Santos, Eduardo Sergio G. Edeza, Ernesto P. Pinpin, Uy Chun Bing and Adeline N. Carbonell.

***

KEPPEL Philippines Marine Inc. on Dec. 19 approved and ratified the renewal of its management and technical consultancy agreements with Keppel Shipyard Ltd. (formerly Keppel Hitachi Zosen Ltd.) for five years beginning Nov. 13, 2005. It also designated president Toh Ko Lin as the authorized signatory to the transaction.

***

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. will hold its annual shareholders' meeting on Feb. 7, 2006, 9 a.m. at the Metropolitan Club Inc. in Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City. All shareholders of record as of Jan. 15, 2006, are entitled to notice of and to vote at the said meeting.

***

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission granted **Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd.**, wholly owned and controlled by Jollibee Foods Corp., a certificate of registration and license to operate a regional headquarters in the Philippines.

Compiled by Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

December 20, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.833125	1.000000	53.3310
Japan	Yen	0.007177	0.008615	0.4594
United Kingdom	Pound	1.468216	1.762300	93.9852
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107474	0.129001	6.8798
Switzerland	Franc	0.644435	0.773515	41.2523
Canada	Dollar	0.712560	0.855286	45.6133
Singapore	Dollar	0.501369	0.601793	32.0942
Australia	Dollar	0.618918	0.742887	39.6189
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.210467	2.653224	141.4991
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222154	0.266652	14.2208
Brunei	Dollar	0.499865	0.599988	31.9980
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000101	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.020360	0.024438	1.3033
UAE	Dirham	0.226830	0.272264	14.5201
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.200300	64.0132
Argentina	Peso	0.274506	0.329489	17.5720
Brazil	Real	0.351307	0.421674	22.4883
Denmark	Kroner	0.134131	0.160997	8.5861
India	Rupee	0.018526	0.022237	1.1859
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220432	0.264585	14.1106
Mexico	New Peso	0.077630	0.093179	4.9693
New Zealand	Dollar	0.574926	0.690084	36.8029
Norway	Kroner	0.124915	0.149936	7.9962
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013913	0.016700	0.8906
South Africa	Rand	0.131284	0.157580	8.4039
Korea	Won	0.000821	0.000985	0.0525
Sweden	Kroner	0.106259	0.127543	6.8020
Syria	Pound	0.016049	0.019264	1.0274
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025107	0.030136	1.6072

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Lopez Christmas bonanza

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IT WAS NOT ONLY FIRST PHILIPPINE HOLDings chair Oscar Lopez who took pre-IPO profits in the forthcoming listing of its subsidiary, First Generation Holdings.

The First Holdings managing director for energy, Peter Garrucho Jr., was even more aggressive than his boss in monetizing his shareholdings obtained from the company's stock option plan.

From October to until last week, the former Ramos executive secretary disposed of more than 324,000 First Holdings shares, selling them in tranches at P41.50 to P49.50 a share. Garrucho easily grossed P14 million from the transactions, and eclipsed the P6.6 million made by Lopez in similar but more restrained sell-offs.

The First Holdings director tripled, even quadrupled, the value of his shareholdings before he disposed of them, since he acquired 146,000 of those shares for P10, and the balance for P15.17 a share.

By Dec. 8, Garrucho still had, despite the sell-offs, a total of 502,152 First Holdings shares to his name.

Another block of 100,458 shares are also listed under Garrucho's name, in his old White Plains home. But, whoops, that is another story.

Jesuitical denial

IT looks like the Ateneo-based CODE-NGO has very much internalized jesuitical reasoning, if not lawyerly dodging.

In a letter to the editor published yesterday, CODE-NGO chair Aurora Tolentino flayed and lectured Cocktales for reporting that CODE-NGO had funded an exposure trip of "farmers" to Hong Kong and another trip to Vietnam by one of their trustees.

"We do not know who gave this false information to Agustin, and why the latter should so readily believe his source," Tolentino wrote, before proceeding to lecture theINQUIRER on accuracy and the need to rein in its columnists.

Strange reaction, since Tolentino herself sits on both the board of the donor and those of the recipient non-governmental organizations.

Funding for the overseas trips, and we have documentary proofs of these, actually came from the Peace and Equity Foundation, where Tolentino sits as a trustee.

Peace and Equity Foundation, in turn, was the select recipient of the more than P1-billion Peace Bond gravy that CODE-NGO, now headed by Tolentino, had collected from the government, courtesy of RCBC.

The recipient of the Vietnam travel grant was a fellow official of Tolentino (whose name we shall withhold) in the Peace and Equity Foundation. CODE-NGO in turn itself received P1.135 million from Peace and Equity Foundation, chaired by Jesuit priest Noel Vasquez, to hold a forum for social development week.

The forum grant is in addition to a P3.24-million grant CODE-NGO received for use in the 2004 elections and a P6.6-million grant for "pork barrel watch," also from the Peace and Equity Foundation.

If this looks like back-scratching, NGO-style, wait until you read the next installment.

Aguirre turnabout

MALACAÑANG has finally allowed the American husband of Banco Filipino heiress Nanette Aguirre-Koruga, who was caught in the bitter Aguirre family feud, to finally return to the Philippines more than two years after his deportation.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, in a directive sent to Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez earlier this month, sought to allow Christopher Koruga a single entry to the country "on a temporary basis, not exceeding three months."

Earlier, the Bureau of Immigration used a 1982 drug-related arrest of Koruga, when he was still in his 20s, despite a US court dismissing the charge and the US Embassy interceding on his behalf.

Ermita's recommendation is a turnaround to the earlier position made by then Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, whose office sat on the appeal papers until after Koruga was deported.

Rather than be separated from the children, Koruga's wife Nanette pulled out the kids from Philippine schooling and followed Koruga in Seattle. There, Nanette's brother, Banco Filipino vice chair Albert "Bobby" Aguirre, attempted but failed to persuade a US court to have his Philippine companies foreclose on Nanette's retirement home business.

Heard through the grapevine

FORMER US Vice President Al Gore has accepted an invitation from taipan Alfonso Yuchengco to deliver a speech in Manila in early February.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Mitsubishi to launch new vehicles despite new VAT

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MITSUBISHI MOTORS PHILIPPINES Corp. is launching a new vehicle next year along with three new models in an effort to counter the slowing effect of the new value-added tax law on the local market.

MMPC senior vice president Melchor Dizon said in an interview that the assembler wanted to keep its market standing and push up sales by at least 10 percent.

Dizon said MMPC would launch its newest Gallant in the first quarter, the latest Lancer in the second quarter, a still undisclosed new vehicle by midyear and a pick up in the fourth quarter.

He added that the company was aiming to keep its second-place slot after market leader Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., which has topped sales in the passenger car and commercial vehicle categories.

"We are looking at sales reaching at least 14,500 units in 2006 from the 13,000 units expected to be sold by the end of 2005," he said.

Dizon said MMPC was confident that sales would still go up despite the slowdown in sales in the past month when the reformed VAT law started to take effect.

Earlier this month, the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi) and the Truck Manufacturers Association reported that the new VAT dragged down vehicle sales in November by 19.7 percent year-on-year.

Campi and TMA said dealers were wary of the "detrimental effect" of the 70-percent cap on firms' input VAT credits.

Yesterday, Dizon said the industry's performance would ultimately depend on the continued proliferation of imported used vehicles.

"Whether the industry sales would grow hinges on how effectively this issue would be addressed," he said.

In August 2005, MMPC officials said the company was setting aside for another year its proposed P10-billion sports utility vehicle production and export program amid problems besetting its parent company in Japan regarding declining sales, huge losses and defects in its product line-up.

MMPC announced in 2004 plans to make completely built SUVs in the country and then ship these out to other Southeast Asian countries. The plan was to export at least 200,000 units in six or seven years.

The announcement came after the auto maker chose the Philippines over Thailand and Indonesia as its manufacturing hub for a CBU export program in the region.

MMPC's plans were geared to take advantage of the Asean agreement that provides incentives to companies that export CBUs designed primarily for the Southeast Asian market.

The program further requires a minimum production of 5,000 units a year at a freight-on-board value of $5,000 a unit.

Gov't . . .

From page B1

erty within five years so it could pay the P2-billion loan to the NDC. The property, according to the PNR chief, was worth about P3.5 billion.

The PNR's Tutuban property is where the Tutuban Mall in Divisoria is located.

Sarasola earlier said the PNR would ask South Korea to extend an additional $70-million loan for the second phase of the rehabilitation of the South Manila line.

The new loan is a follow up to the $50-million credit that Korea's lending agencies had approved for the PNR for the upgrading of the Caloocan-Alabang line. The $70-million loan will be used for the line from Alabang to Calamba.

Improvements in the South Manila line, according to Sarasola, would allow PNR to recover and eventually privatize its operations.

Once a pillar of the Philippines' land transport network, PNR is now deep in debts and relies purely on government subsidy to stay afloat.

But the PNR still has ample landholdings that it can use as collateral to raise money to pay debts and infuse new capital into its operations.

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Success of Roro . . .

From page B1

strengthen his hand vis-à-vis the bank, although he stressed that the viability of the business remains DBP's top criterion.

"We are less strict with collateral if they have the cash flow," he said.

And herein lies one of the main points of conflict.

The Department of Transportation and Communications, which is the lead agency under President Macapagal-Arroyo's program, is encouraging poorer LGUs to "start small."

DOTC Undersecretary Agustin R. Bengzon—himself a former ship operator—says operators can enter the business by leasing even second-hand World War II-era landing craft, some of which can accommodate as few as four vehicles for the smaller routs of the Roro system.

"You don't even need a pier," he said, explaining that the landing craft are capable of loading and offloading vehicles directly onto beaches. "All you need is a nearby barangay road."

DBP, however, has resisted the temptation to simply turn on the taps and grant loans to any would-be Roro operator who would ask for it.

"We want to finance vessels that are 'internationally classed'," Enecio said. "We look closely at the value of the vessel because DBP holds it as collateral."

The bank's high standard for accepting collateral almost instantly eliminates a host of smaller private operators and LGUs located away from profitable commercial routes—nullifying DOTC's recommendation for them to start with small-scale operations.

The value of the vessel isn't the only difference between the DBP and the DOTC. Enecio said the bank is also averse to funding the kind of small-time Roro operations being advocated by DOTC.

"We have to go for quality," he said, adding that older vessels often have to pay higher insurance premiums because of the higher safety risks assigned to them. "This is a major undertaking so we're doing it for keeps."

Enecio said that DBP has actually been financing Roro shipping since 1989, having already lent out an estimated P6 billion for this program.

"Some of these loans have already been repaid while some [collateral of defaulting borrowers] have already been foreclosed," he said.

Trade vs tourism

Aside from the conflicting philosophies among state agencies, private sector players want something almost entirely different from what the Arroyo administration is pushing for.

In particular, members of the Distribution Management Association of the Philippines (DMAP) want government to focus on the development of long-haul Roro routes that would allow truckers to bypass smaller, less significant ports, and go directly to profit areas, like a direct link from Batangas to Cagayan de Oro City, for example.

DMAP executive director Ed Sanchez said his organization is lobbying for the development of long-haul routes because it will save transportation costs and time.

However, President Arroyo's original executive order set a 50-nautical mile limit for Roro channel crossings—a limit Sanchez said caps the attractiveness of the system for DMAP's 100 member-firms which include the likes of Nestlé, Purefoods, Universial Robina Corp., Unilever, Procter & Gamble and Colgate-Palmolive, among others.

Sanchez said his organization is excited about the prospects of the program since it will eliminate the need for companies to maintain expensive warehouses and inventory in Visayas and Mindanao, since they will be able to ship goods directly from their factories in Luzon.

"Some members say there are significant savings of up to 30 percent," he said.

But for these savings to be realized, he said the government's trade promotion efforts should shift to long-haul routes.

"Others want island hopping," he said, referring to the government's plan to help tourism by encouraging short transfers from island to island. "But short hops are more expensive."

From 'Roro' to 'Dodo'

Sanchez also complains that existing Roro operators continue to make a killing by insisting on charging handling fees for towing vehicles and cargo on and off ships.

"What we have is not a true Roro system," he said. "The system we have is more expensive."

The DMAP official said he is batting for a more efficient system he calls drive-on, drive-off—or "Dodo"—as opposed to the existing Roro scheme, which he said is still inefficient because vehicle operators are not allowed to drive their vehicles directly onto ships.

Officials at the DOTC, D BP and the private sector agree on the potential of the Roro system for improving both trade and tourism in the country. However, they have different ideas on how the scheme should proceed forward.

Already, the Arroyo administration has earmarked some P35 billion for the development of support infrastructure for the nautical highways, for Roro ports and the highways connecting them under the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

Greater coordination among stakeholders and a harmonization of their priorities is crucial in this investment to avoid going the way of countless other government initiatives which turned into "white elephants."

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FPA BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 02
Series of 2005

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree (PD) 1144 created the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) principally to regulate the use of pesticides, the improper usage of which presents serious risk to users, handlers, and the public in general, given the inherent toxicity of those compounds which are moreover, potential agricultural produce and environmental contaminants;

WHEREAS, starting in September 2004, certain batches of Philippine mango exports to Japan had been detected to contain chlorpyrifos residue above the acceptable new Japanese Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) of 0.05 ppm;

WHEREAS, the FPA, together with the Bureau of Plant Industry and some local Municipal Agricultural Officers in some localities in Davao where the questioned mangoes came from, discovered that the excess in acceptable residue limit was due to violations of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) on the use of chlorpyrifos including the observance of Pre-harvest Interval (PHI) rule;

WHEREAS, the "PHI rule" as prescribed by FPA for mangoes sprayed with chlorpyrifos-containing products against hoppers is to "allow at least fifty (50) days interval before harvest" so that the residue if ever present would be well within the Japan prescribed MRL;

WHEREAS, the FPA has concluded that based on the empirical data available, the cause of "higher residue than the MRL in the Japan export" is due mainly to the improper use of chlorpyrifos by mango farmers;

WHEREAS, the improper use by the mango producers of chlorpyrifos is attributed to the farmers refusal to adhere to GAP while responsible farmers especially those producing mango in "institutional farm" religiously keep track of the time and quantity of the pesticide and fertilizer applied as recommended by FPA;

WHEREAS, several mango exporters, and some local government officials have requested FPA to officially suspend the use of chlorpyrifos-containing products for mango to avoid its improper use;

WHEREAS, twenty-seven (27) active ingredients contained in twenty-eight formulations registered with FPA (MC 01, series of 2005) are available insecticides for mango hoppers. It is also recognized that chlorpyrifos is the only remaining organophosphate class of compound for insect resistance management in mango;

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, the Board resolves as it hereby resolves to temporarily suspend the use and registration of chlorpyrifos-containing products for mangoes except for "institutional or plantation-type farm," effective upon approval by the Board herein and shall remain effective until such time that all the issues on improper use are resolved.

RESOLVED, FURTHER that a temporary withdrawal of chlorpyrifos-containing products approved for mango hoppers (Nurelle D, Tandem EC and Rador 262.5 EC, Predetor Plus EC, Bombard 275EC) from dealers, distributors and non-institutional or non-plantation type growers which do not follow GAP, or do not have a monitoring system in place, shall be conducted by the registrant-companies and report on such activities shall be provided to FPA.

RESOLVED, FINALLY, that violation of any of the conditions and requirements of aforesaid resolution shall result in penalties consistent with PD 1144.

Approved by:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary of Agriculture and
Chairman of the Board, FPA

PETER B. FAVILA
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry

MARGARITO B. TEVES
Secretary
Department of Finance

AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

for
OMAR BYRON T. MIER
President
Philippine National Bank

LOLIBETH R. MEDRANO
Director
Environmental Management Bureau

LEALYN A. RAMOS
Officer-in-Charge
Bureau of Plant Industry

LETICIA BARBARA BANEZ-GUTIERREZ
Director
Bureau of Food and Drugs

FPA BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 03
Series of 2005

WHEREAS, the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) was created in order to, among others, protect the public from the inherent risks in the use of pesticides, and educating the agricultural sector in the use of these inputs;

WHEREAS, pursuant thereto, the FPA Board issued Resolution No. 01, Series of 1993, restricting the use of Endosulfan to 5 E.C. or at a lower concentrate;

WHEREAS, Del Monte Philippines, Inc. (DMPI) and Dole Philippines, Inc. (DPI) has requested the FPA Board to allow them to use Endosulfan with concentration of 5 % until they can come up with a viable alternative or replacement to control the insect vectors that transmit the causal pathogen of pink disease in their pineapple plantations;

WHEREAS, DMPI and DPI has indicated that, without a viable replacement to Endosulfan that meets all the requirements for the control of insect vectors that transmit the causal pathogen of pink disease, the Philippine pineapple industry will suffer quality problems and will lose its international market;

WHEREAS, DMPI and DPI has substantially complied for several years FPA Board Resolutions regarding the safety requirements on the use of Endosulfan with no significant adverse effects on the workers and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Board after due consideration resolves to GRANT the request of DMPI and DPI.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board hereby RESOLVES to GRANT the request of DMPI and DPI as institutional user of Endosulfan for a period of three (3) years from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, instead of a yearly approval, to control the insect vectors that transmit the causal pathogen of pink disease in their respective pineapple plantations, subject to the same compliance of FPA Board Resolution No. 01, Series of 2001 and the Revised FPA Guidelines on the Institutional Use of Endosulfan in Pineapple Plantations.

RESOLVED, FINALLY, that any violation of any of the conditions and requirements of aforesaid resolution shall result in the revocation of the authority herein allowed.

Quezon City, Philippines, 16 November 2005.

Approved by:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary of Agriculture and
Chairman of the Board, FPA

PETER B. FAVILA
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry

PORFIRIO B. VILLENA, Jr.
For and in behalf of the
Secretary of Finance

for
OMAR BYRON T. MIER
President
Philippine National Bank

for
AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

LOLIBETH R. MEDRANO
Director
Environmental Management Bureau

LEALYN A. RAMOS
Officer-in-Charge
Bureau of Plant Industry

LETICIA BARBARA BANEZ-GUTIERREZ
Director
Bureau of Food and Drugs

FPA Board Resolution No. 04
Series of 2005

WHEREAS, the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) is a regulatory agency created by Presidential Decree (PD) 1144, an agency attached to the Department of Agriculture.

WHEREAS, the FPA controls and monitors the production, formulation, importation and distribution of fertilizer and pesticide products. Likewise, it also registers the products and licenses of handlers of these inputs.

WHEREAS, the FPA issued Pesticide Circular No. 4, Series of 1989 which includes Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane (DDT) in the "Dirty Dozen Pesticides" and reiterates its restricted use for malaria control by the Department of Health.

WHEREAS, DOH Memorandum Circular No. 1, Series of 1992 ordered the phasing out of DDT for malaria control due to the availability of less toxic alternative insecticides.

WHEREAS, due to commitment of the Philippine government to the International conventions (i.e. Stockholm Convention on POPs), DOH requested FPA to revise the category of DDT from "Restricted Pesticide" to "Banned Pesticide."

NOW, THEREFORE, upon motion duly seconded, the Board **RESOLVES** to **APPROVE** the revision of the category of DDT from "Restricted Pesticide" to "Banned Pesticide."

This resolution shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in one (1) newspaper of general circulation. Thereafter, the banning of the importation and use of DDT shall take effect immediately and remaining stocks shall be confiscated.

Quezon City, Philippines, 16 November 2005.

Approved by:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary of Agriculture and
Chairman of the Board, FPA

LEALYN A. RAMOS
Officer-in-Charge
Bureau of Plant Industry

PORFIRIO B. VILLENA, JR.
For and in behalf of the
Secretary of Finance

RAUL V. ANGELES
For and in behalf of the
Secretary of Trade & Industry

for
AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

for
OMAR BYRON T. MIER
President
Philippine National Bank

LOLIBETH R. MEDRANO
Director
Environmental Management Bureau

LETICIA BARBARA BANEZ-GUTIERREZ
Director
Bureau of Food and Drugs

November 14, 2005

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
No. 04
Series of 2005

Subject : Prescribing A License Fee to Hardware Selling Structural Pesticide with Annual Sales of Less than P50,000

As a result of field inspection and clean up drive activities, there is a proliferation of unlicensed hardware stores selling structural pesticides in various areas in the provinces and municipalities all throughout the country. These stores are found to be selling banned, unregistered and fake pesticides and are used by some illegal manufacturers and formulators of fake pesticide products as distribution and selling outlets. Likewise, some pesticide companies also distribute their products to these unlicensed hardware stores contrary to the provisions of P D 1144 and its implementing rules and regulations.

The proliferation of illegal activities in the distribution and selling of banned, unregistered and fake pesticides may be reduced when these hardware stores are licensed under FPA as monitoring of their activities and enforcement of FPA rules and regulations may be easily facilitated. Likewise, the unscrupulous manufacturers or formulators of these illegal pesticide products may be denied of their distribution outlets and pesticide companies may use these licensed hardware stores as legitimate distribution centers.

Owners of these hardware stores are willing to undergo training and licensing as long as the license fee is rationalized considering their limited volume of annual sales for structural pesticide products.

In view of the above considerations and as per guidelines on schedule of fees and charges for accreditation and licensing of pesticide handlers, hardware stores selling structural pesticides with an annual sales of less than FIFTY THOUSAND (P50,000.00) PESOS are required to pay a license fee of SIX HUNDRED (P600.00) PESOS for a period of three (3) years. This fee does not apply to the renewal of existing hardware stores licensed prior to this circular unless they request for reclassification and show proof that they fall within the annual sales herein prescribed.

This order takes effect immediately and the prescribed license fee shall be implemented only after 15 days of the date of publication in a newspaper of wide circulation.

NORLITO R. GICANA, CESO IV
Executive Director III

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation & Communications
LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING & REGULATORY BOARD

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NUMBER 2005-058

SUBJECT : **SUPPLEMENT OF MC 2005-042, RE: SUBMISSION OF CERTIFICATE OF YEAR MODEL**

In order to avoid submission of spurious and falsified Certificate/s of PUB Year Model, all franchise holders are hereby mandated to submit the required data under oath that they are complying with MC 2005-042, and that all documents attached therein must be certified true copies duly issued by appropriate government agency concerned including the official receipt of payment for the request for certified true copy.

This Memorandum Circular takes effect immediately.

Quezon City, Philippines. **Dec. 20, 2005**

MARIA ELENA H. BAUTISTA
Chairperson

GERARDO A. PINILI
Board Member

MA. ELLEN DIRIGE-CABATU
Board Member

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation & Communications
LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING & REGULATORY BOARD

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NUMBER 2005-057

SUBJECT : **REITERATION OF RULE 13 OF THE LTFRB RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES**

In view of the increasing number of accidents involving Public Utility Vehicles for the past few months, this Board hereby reiterates Rule 13, Sec. 1 of the LTFRB Rules of Practice and Procedures. Pursuant thereto, ***"The Board may prior to the hearing, suspend for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days, any certificate or the exercise of any right or authority issued or granted under the Act or E.O., whenever it is necessary to avoid death, physical injuries, defraudation of public utility users, or willfully or contumaciously refuse to comply with the orders, rules or regulations of the Board, or any provision of the E.O. and the Act."***

All the authorized units under the franchise/case number where the involved motor vehicle is included shall be suspended after service of the copy of the order pursuant to aforequoted rule.

Accordingly, all the authorized units under the suspended franchise shall be brought to the Land Transportation Office with Motor Vehicles Inspection System (MVIS) for inspection of the units on roadworthiness. All the drivers of the operators are mandated to undergo Road Safety seminars conducted by the same office.

The lifting of the suspension order shall only be made upon presentation of the respondent-operator of its certificates of compliance with the directive in the immediately preceding paragraph.

This Memorandum Circular supersedes any and all issuances incosistent herewith, and takes effect immediately.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, Philippines. **Dec. 20, 2005**

MARIA ELENA H. BAUTISTA
Chairperson

GERARDO A. PINILI
Board Member

MA. ELLEN DIRIGE-CABATU
Board Member

(PDI - Dec 21, 2005)

AN APPEAL TO ABS-CBN

December 17, 2005

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation
Ma. Ignacia Street corner Sargeant Esguerra Avenue
Quezon City, Philippines
(Thru: Mr. Arman Gante's E-mail)

Re : **Request for Ms. Wesy B. Quisumbing's Story to Be shown on Kontrobersyal**

Attn : **Mr. Boy Abunda**
TV Host – Kontrobersyal

Mr. Denmark G. Alejandro
Segment Producer / Writer – Kontrobersyal

Mr. Armand Gante
Researcher – Kontrobersyal

Gentlemen:

I write on behalf of my client, **Ms. Wesy B. Quisumbing.**

On December 6, 2005, the story of Ms. Quisumbing was bannered.

On the basis of said story, you showed deep interest in featuring the life of Ms. Quisumbing and requested me thru a letter dated December 7, 2005 to feature her story in the December 16, 2005 segment of your TV Show, "Kontrobersyal." In the same letter, you likewise emphasized the need to feature Ms. Quisumbing's story to ultimately put a stop to the discrimination of people similarly situated as Ms. Quisumbing because of their "sexual orientations."

In view of your consistent and very ardent requests and despite Ms. Quisumbing's very hectic schedule, my client accepted your invitation for her to be interviewed by the award wining and very amiable and very respectable host, Mr. Boy Abunda. Several postponements of the interview were, thereafter, made until such time when the schedule of Mr. Boy Abunda was cleared for the interview. Thus, Ms. Quisumbing and her entourage flew all the way from Cebu to Manila for said purpose and the interview was conducted with all your assurances that the same shall be shown on December 16, 2005.

Guided by the principles of responsible journalism and TV Ethics and with a deep sense of professionalism and intellect, Mr. Boy Abunda (who was fully cognizant of the parameters of the sub-judice doctrine and delving merely on the life and experiences of Ms. Quisumbing), conducted the interview without asking any questions concerning the merits of the cases respecting the Quisumbing Family.

Be that is it may, and around 11:30 in the evening of December 15, 2005, you called me up thru cellular phone that you also interviewed the counsel of Ms. Quisumbing's adversaries to hear their side of the story. You reasoned out that you had to do it to maintain impartiality and objectiveness in your reports. My client and I, trusting on your deep sense of impartiality and professionalism, did not howl any protest respecting the matter.

Surprisingly, and without due regard to the doctrine of estoppel, one of the aforesaid adversaries of Ms. Quisumbing in the case entitled "Wesy B. Quisumbing vs. University of San Jose Recoletos (and Norberto B. Quisumbing, Jr.), Civil Case No. CEB-31885 filed a Motion for Injunction with the Regional Trial Court of Cebu City, Branch 5 (presided over by Judge Ireneo Lee Gaco, Jr.,) to prevent the showing of Ms. Quisumbing's story on "Kontrobersyal" based on the sub-judice doctrine. I attended the hearing of said motion on December 16, 2005 and argued otherwise for two (2) long, tiring and arduous hours. In the same hearing, I also emphasized, among others, the constitutional freedom of expression and of the press and the need for the life of Ms. Quisumbing to be shown on "Kontrobersyal" as it concerns public matter and interest.

In view thereof, the RTC of Cebu, Branch 5, which obviously has no territorial jurisdiction over a non-party to the aforesaid case, ABS-CBN (which is based in Manila), did not issue any Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) and/or Injunction to prevent the showing of Ms. Quisumbing's story on "Kontrobersyal."

Around 10 P.M. last night, however, you broke the unexpected news that Ms. Quisumbing's story would no longer be shown on the December 16, 2005 segment of "Kontrobersyal" as the counsel of Ms. Quisumbing's adversary directed you to stop the showing on the alleged basis of the sub-judice doctrine. This unfortunate decision on your part happened at the most unholy hour when Ms. Quisumbing and your very eager televiewers were already glued to their TV sets waiting for your most "Kontrobersyal" story of the year. You, however, assured us that the showing of Ms. Quisumbing's story was just "put on hold and would be further edited" for you to really be assured of non-violation of any court doctrine.

In the meantime, Ms. Quisumbing, has once again felt severe depression and discrimination which your TV story sought to prevent. For while interviews concerning court cases of the so-called "normal people" are being done wantonly and without due regard to the sub-judice doctrine, Ms. Quisumbing's personal story, which does not even touch on the pending cases, however, is apparently being suppressed just because she is perceived to belong to a very unique group of people.

In this regard, we appeal to your sense of fairness and justice and do the editing of her pre-taped story as you wish so as not to run afoul to the merits of the pending cases in court. We, however, urge you to show her story on the next schedule of your "Kontrobersyal" TV show and inform the public about it in due course so that the psychological trauma and severe depression which are being experienced by Ms. Quisumbing which were brought about the non-showing of her story last night, may be assuaged.

On top of these, we believe that you owe it both to the public and to your profession as responsible journalists and TV Host/s to raise the awareness of the people about giving due respect, acceptance and understanding of Ms. Wesy B. Quisumbing and of persons similarly situated.

Thank you very much for giving this matter your utmost preferential attention.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) **Paris G. Real**
Counsel for Ms. Wesy B. Quisumbing
(Real Brotarlo and Real Law Offices)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis Street, Pasay City, Metro Manila Philippines
Telephones (632) 5513438 • 5513454 • Facsimile (632) 5513436
E-mail: info@peza.gov.ph • Website: www.peza.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2005 intends to apply the sum of PhP2,342,253.58 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Network Equipment and Structured Cabling for Head Office (Vertical Cabling only), BEZ and CEZ.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the: a) Head Office Structured Cabling (Vertical Cabling Only), b) Cavite Economic Zone Structured Cabling, c) Bataan Economic Zone Structured Cabling, d) Existing Head Office Router Upgrade, e) 3 Units Remote Router with Complete Accessories, f) 10 Units Edge Switches with Complete Accessories, and g) 15 units UPS (500VA). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens / sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from 21-29 December 2005, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of PhP 2,500.00 and submission of a certified copy of their G-EPS Certificate of Registration. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 09 January 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, Almeda Building III, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 23 January 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 23 January 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, Almeda Bldg., III Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F Almeda Building III Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No. 551-3587
e-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
website: www.peza.gov.ph

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-Dec. 21 & 27, 2005)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF UNISERVICES, INC.

Notice is hereby given to the public that **Uniservices, Inc.**, with Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") Registration No. A200011040 incorporated on 13 July 2000, will file with the SEC a Certificate of Amendment of its Articles of Incorporation shortening its corporate life to 13 December 2005. This dissolution is in accordance with the resolution of its Board of Directors dated 7 November 2005 duly approved by its stockholders representing at least two-thirds (2/3) of its outstanding capital stock on 14 November 2005.

Any person who may have a claim against said Corporation may present the same to the undersigned at Suite D, 7th Floor, The Valero Tower, 1227, Makati City, Metro Manila.

This announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) **Danilo L. Cruz**
Corporate Secretary
UNISERVICES, INC.

(PDI–Dec. 7, 14 & 21, 2005)

NTC projecting ₱1.7-B collection next year

Piltel settlement boosts '05 earnings to ₱2.1B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission said it could raise only P1.7 billion from fees and charges in 2006 even as collection this year would likely exceed P2.1 billion.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said that collection this year was unusually high due to a P550-million windfall profit from a settlement deal with Pilipino Telephone Corp. on its unpaid and previously contested dues.

All agencies, according to Solis, were directed by economic planners to double their revenue raising efforts to help bring down the government's budget deficit.

The NTC's collection target this year was only P1.78 billion but as of end-September, it had already raised P2.07 billion from fees and charges. Last year, the NTC collected only P1.5 billion.

From January to August, the regulator collected P1.23 billion from its covered entities, including telecom companies, broadcast firms and cable television operators, data from the NTC showed.

In September, the Commission hauled in P837.57 million from covered companies that beat the end-September deadline for the payment of regulatory fees.

For the whole year, the NTC collected P1.4 billion in regulatory fees.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and its three subsidiaries accounted for a little over P1 billion of the total amount collected by the NTC. Globe Telecom Inc. and Innove Communications Inc. paid P257 million. The remaining P41 million were paid by broadcast and pay TV companies.

Entities covered by the NTC are required to pay supervision and regulatory fee of 50 centavos for every P100 in paid capital.

The NTC's collection from supervision and regulatory fees this year was 75 percent higher than the P800 million collected last year.

On top of its P550-million settlement, Piltel paid another P9.17 million in February and P81.36 million on Sept. 30. The payment, according to the NTC was for 2004 and 2005. Piltel coughed up P640.5 million this year to pay the regulatory fees.

Its parent company, Smart Communications Inc., settled P121.65 million while PLDT paid P242.42 million. Meridian Telekoms Inc., which will soon be fully-owned by Smart, remitted P2.05 million.

The NTC and Piltel reached a compromise in February , which reduced the telecom firm's assessed past due account of P1.3 billion on the latter's past due account, following a justice department opinion cautioning the regulator about the "confiscatory nature" of its surcharges and penalties.

Bayan Telecommunications Inc. settled P34.78 million while Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. and its unit, Digitel Mobile Phils. Inc., paid P15.36 million.

Eastern Telecommunications Phils. Inc. and its subsidiary, Telecoms Technology Phils. Inc., paid P17.41 million. Others—including Philcom, Philcomsat, Bell Telecommunications Phils. Inc., Multimedia Telephony and Liberty Telecoms—paid between P1.36 million and P7.47 million.

The NTC also collects fees from covered companies on the use of the spectrum or airwaves, for permit to operate and licensing.

Global Steel starts commercial operation

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES INC. SAID IT had notified the Department of Trade and Industry that it had started commercial operation and that it was seeking certification from the Board of Investments.

GSPI officials said in a statement that the firm was also expecting to start the operation of its hot-rolled mill in the Iligan City plant early next year.

The hot-rolled mill can churn out yearly 1.2 million metric tons of hot-rolled coils, which are inputs for the manufacturing of cold-rolled coils (CRCs). The latter are used in making industrial goods such as automobile components and precision tubes.

Also, GSPI said it could put on line before April 2006 its tin plate mill, which can produce 150,000 MT yearly of the raw material used in making tin cans for various uses.

Officials said trial runs of the hot-rolled mill were already complete while the rehabilitation of the tin plate line was ongoing.

Since taking over the former National Steel Corp. two years ago, GSPI has been asking the government for support, including increased tariffs on steel products and tax incentives.

However, trade officials said GSPI needed to start commercial operation first before it could enjoy any such support.

A subsidiary of the Indian-owned Global Steel Holdings Ltd. (GSHL), GSPI produces "international-standard quality products and has emerged as the Philippines' largest exporter of cold-rolled products."

GSHL has infused a total of $59 million into the former state firm—$22 million for the cost of acquisition and about $37 million for the rehabilitation and operational support.

Company data show that it has exported at least 80,000 MT of CRCs and sold locally 46,000 MT. The reopening of the Iligan facility has provided direct employment to 1,200 workers.

In April 2004, months after clinching a deal to acquire NSC for P13 billion, GSHL officials said they were gearing up the Iligan plant to feeding the steel-hungry construction boom in China by putting up a blast furnace within three years.

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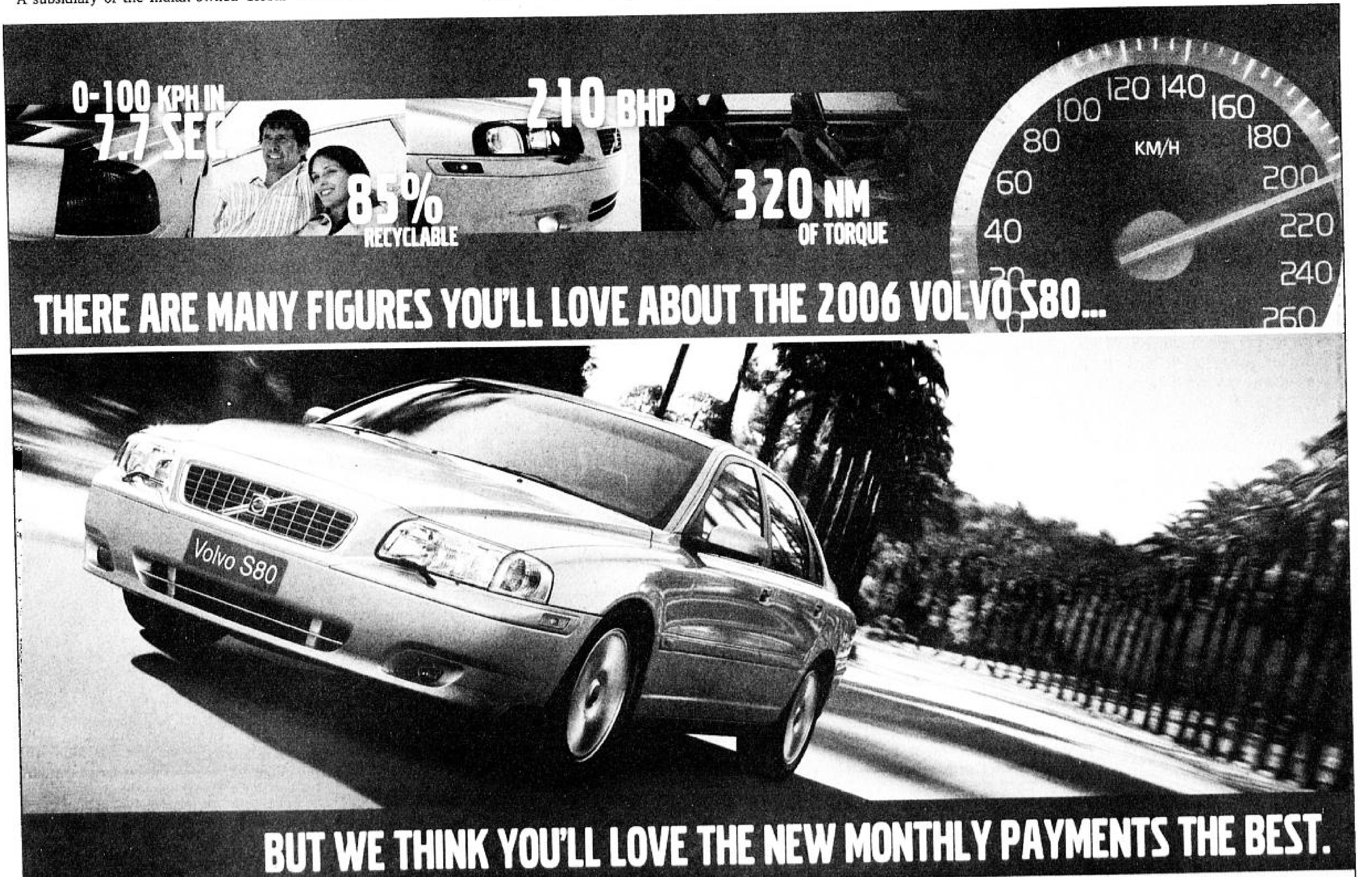
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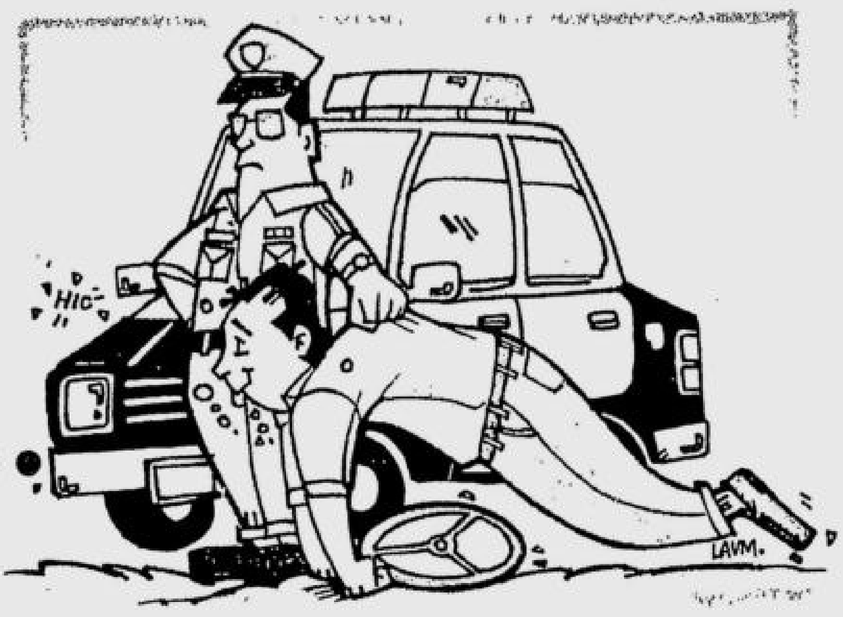
MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: inquirer mtr name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Traffic cops may not have portable breathalyzers, but...



By Tessa R. Salazar

DRUNK DRIVERS STILL have to think twice before staggering to the steering wheel. The holiday season presents one grand invitation for individuals to eat, drink and be merry.

Law enforcers assure the motoring public, however, that despite lacking essential equipment to pin down DUIs (drivers under the influence of alcohol or other illegal substances) on the spot, they will be doubly vigilant on the streets.

Tedious process

Land Transportation Office's safety education chief Daisy Jacobo says that the lack of portable breathalyzers and drug-testing equipment only means that the process of determining whether a suspect driver is under the influence of alcohol or any other dangerous substance just gets more tedious, especially for the driver in question. That means the driver will have to be brought right away to the PNP laboratory or other government-run hospitals for testing.

"How do you apprehend drunk drivers and substance abuse drivers? We bring them to hospitals or to the PNP lab, which is more tedious for everybody," stated Jacobo.

But it's all a necessary hassle for law enforcers. "Better apprehend them and save their lives rather than they continuously flirt with danger and eventually get killed or kill others," a traffic cop said.

"You don't have any business playing God when you are drunk," Jacobo warned.

The Department of Transportation and Communications has been trying to get the budget approved to acquire the tools of anti-DUI enforcement such as portable drug-testing kits and breathalyzers.

Auto accidents on the rise

The Traffic Management Group, meanwhile, has reported an increase of drunk-driving accidents nationwide, from 176 in 2001 to 288 in 2004. By comparison, there were 422 reported hit-and-run cases in 2001 and 733 in 2004.

Accidents involving drivers using cell phones rose from 14 in 2001 to 160 in 2004. Those involving other causes also rose from 491 in 2001 to 605 in 2004.

Overall, accidents caused by automobiles ranked the highest from 4,014 in 2001 to 4,518 in 2004.

Owner-type jeeps and jeepneys have also been accident-prone types of vehicles. The number of accidents involving jeeps has sharply risen from 939 in 2001 to 3,112 in 2004. Not far behind was the number of accidents involving motorcycles, with 3,010 reported cases in 2004 compared to just 506 in 2001.

In addition, there were 1,949 tricycles involved in accidents in 2004, from 526 in 2001. Accidents involving trucks decreased to 1,264 in 2004 from 1,403 in 2001. The same trend has been observed with buses, from 2,381 accidents in 2001 to 1,134 in 2004.

The TMG has observed that many accidents involving trucks and cars during the holidays had the cars ramming the rear underside of trucks. This is an indication that car drivers were going too fast along the slow lane or shoulder, or their reflexes were greatly diminished.

Accident reports

Accident data collection in the field has been observed to have improved, but a central data base is still needed to become sound basis for policy-making. Insofar as accident reporting is concerned, hospital and police records have not been fully reconciled.

Those considered DUIs are not all intoxicated by alcohol or under the influence of prohibited drugs, they can also be the ones taking medicines that would make them drowsy.

Jacobo stressed that drivers could still enjoy the holidays and still go home in one piece. Her tips: plan ahead before drinking, and have a designated driver.

And what about drivers who are on special medication? Jacobo said physicians can advise patients and the authorities on the particular driving limitations of their patients.

She also urged operators and drivers of public utility vehicles not to forego pretrip inspections in order to make more trips for more profits, especially during the Christmas season. Terminal inspectors and traffic enforcers, she said, should be more vigilant of the loading capacities of public vehicles.

The Ten Best of 2005

(First of two parts)

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE TITLE IS SIMPLE AND SELF-explanatory, ladies and gentlemen. We've had a lot to complain about the past year; heaven knows we've all been affected by the societal and financial fluctuations of the last 12 months. From an automotive point of view though, there were many bright spots worth a second glance. Here are some of the defining moments, interesting cars and innovative technologies of recent memory.

10 **Suzuki Swift**— Don't we just all love an underdog? Many things about this car will make conservative, conventional buyers to look in the other direction. Suzuki's resale values are not the best in the market, plus their endeavors in their non-SUV vehicles have been rather less than satisfactory. Yet, the 2005 Suzuki Swift will beg to quarrel these preconceived notions. Hopefully this car is an indication of the brand's future automotive releases.

Body styling is delightfully European in nature, the interior is very well executed and the dynamics have been praised in more mature markets, where the vehicle has been thoroughly reviewed by the foreign press. I am personally itching for a test drive in the very near future, as the 101-bhp, 1.5-liter inline four is apparently quite an amusing partner to the small, agile frame.

9 **Hyundai CRDi Systems**— If one is going to buy a Hyundai this year, please make sure that you are able to at least test the common rail, direct-injection turbo engines in the lineup. Solely responsible for reviving the aging Starex van platform, this same engine technology makes the notion of owning the Matrix compact more palatable. The ante is upped with the very good news that the Getz super mini will also be available with the same torque-laden engine.

The resulting vehicle package will already probably solve the warm hatch needs of many. This is a brand that has gone to great lengths in promoting the leading edge of diesel technology, and the benefits will serve to add excitement to both lives of the owners and the marquee alike.

8 **Mazda 3 Hatch/Sedan**— The impact of this model, based on the C1 Medium platform shared by FMC stable mates Volvo and Ford, continues well into 2005. The 2.0-liter engine is still one of the more lively, stock Japanese engines in the market today, while the 1.6-liter is at the very least decent. Couple this with the comely, "double-take styling" of the Mazda compact and eventual commercial success was only an inevitability.

Many were worried that the dramatic lines of the coachwork would wear off a few months after the launch, but I personally find myself still staring at examples of this vehicle on our roads.

7 **Kia Picanto**—What can one expect of a seriously cheap car? Logically not much, but the Picanto shatters the notion that truly economical cars are never fun to drive. A punchy and lively, small displacement engine is the perfect accompaniment to the light and surprisingly reasonable chassis. Though the interior will always remind you that it is still light years behind the very best cars, please remember that this is a car that will also leave a lot more change in your wallet after purchase.

Practical transport is at hand with the Picanto, if one can leave the pride and prejudice behind.

6 **BMW 530d**—Don't knock this diesel-powered sedan until you've been able to floor the throttle of the common-rail, direct injection monster under the hood. Unabashedly the greatest local market argument for the new-fangled, high-pressure rail "sporting diesels," the 7.1-second to 100- kph, 530d is 100 percent able to induce g forces more associated with roller coasters and bungee stunts. Add this ample engine to the electronics, safety and engineering package of the new 5 Series and begin to understand why the price it commands is so rightfully premium.

Purists will deride the body's "Bangle angles," but seat time will make many forget the divisive design statements associated with the current crop of Bimmers. Motoring hacks in other countries actually point to the bigger, 6.5-second to 100-k/hp, 535d twin-turbo, common rail diesel as a more viable, real-world alternative to the 507-bhp, V10 power plant of the astounding M5 grand touring sedan.

There we have it, the first half of the most memorable moments of 2005. Next week's installment will, at the very least, be a subject of debate for a good deal of time to come. Keep glued and Happy Holidays to one and all.

Time to be, to do, good; PAL re-fleeting

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

IT IS FOUR DAYS TO CHRISTMAS, CHRISTendom's most venerated day since it's the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you haven't been good all this time to your loved ones; neighbor or even a total stranger, this is the time to make amends.

Many have done good even before the season's advent, and I can't help but doff my hat off to Toyota, which recently donated P1 million to the city government of Sta. Rosa, Laguna, to build classrooms at Pulong Sta. Cruz Elementary School. Surely, hundreds of kids will benefit from this charitable deed once more by Toyota, which had similarly donated P1 million each to Tabang Mindanaw and Gawad Kalinga in 2004 and 2003, respectively, through Toyota chair George S.K. Ty.

Let's also be a man—a person—for others this merriest of months.

Anything to make someone happy will do. You'll be surprised at how wondrous, magical, a *supot* of pancit can do to your neighbor's driver, or even a box of hopia to a gasoline boy.

Merry Christmas!

* * *

Here's a glass to Philippine Airlines for its continued avowal to modernize its fleet.

Special mention goes to Jimmy Bautista, Henry So Uy and Bong Cruz, PAL's "Workaholic Trio," who, I am sure, made key moves to realize the deal. Likewise getting my warm felicitations for this new PAL milestone are Rollie Estabillo and his corporate communications staff.

Early this month, the flag carrier signed a purchase agreement to acquire up to 18 Airbus A320 family aircraft.

The package, worth approximately $840 million, included 9 brand-new A320 jets and options for 5 more new A320s.

PAL vice chair and treasurer Mariano Tanenglian signed for the flag carrier while Airbus senior vice president for customer affairs-Asia, Paul Kiteley, represented the European airplane manufacturer.

"In modernizing our narrow-body fleet, our objectives are to improve on our operational benchmarks, offer an enhanced and consistent service to our passengers, and optimize revenue through commonality of equipment. We believe the A320 family provides PAL the means to achieve these goals," said Tanenglian.

Airbus president and CEO Gustav Humbert said: "PAL has been an Airbus operator for more than 25 years and I am delighted that the positive experience with the A320 in recent years has contributed significantly to this further order for the type. The new A320s will ensure PAL's ability to further maximize profit potential, while offering passengers the highest standards of in-flight comfort available today."

Deliveries of the firm orders as well as leased units will commence in the second half of 2006 and continue until 2008. Deliveries of the option aircraft, should PAL take them up, will start in 2009 and run until 2012.

By December 2008, when the major part of the refleeting program is completed, PAL will have an all-new narrow-body fleet consisting of 14 A320s and two A319s. This will give the airline the advantage of operating a uniform fleet, with one aircraft type, one engine type and one biclass cabin layout.

"Our brand-new aircraft, equipped with the most modern technology and amenities, will allow PAL to offer an unmatched product to the market. This fleet modernization program is a fitting milestone as we mark PAL's 65th anniversary in March 2006," said Tanenglian.

* * *

NLEX PLUS. Going to a weekend Hong Kong will cost two persons at least P70,000 for ticket/hotel, excluding food expenses. You won't spend that much going to Subic or Clark via the North Luzon Expressway, Ping de Jesus' world-class babe. You'll be surprised but for P30,000 or less, you could spend a beautiful, memorable, weekend this time of year at Subic or Clark.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Sadly, despite the cold weather, the car air-con should still be switched on when on the road. Reason: Pollution in the metropolis could choke the baby aboard the car.

Isuzu unveils 4-wheel variant of Alterra

By Charles E. Buban

HOPING TO "ADD A LITTLE MORE spice" to its sport recreational vehicle model lineup, Isuzu Philippines Corp. (IPC) recently unveiled a four-wheel drive variant of the Alterra.

With this go-anywhere Alterra, IPC hopes to entice a segment of its loyal customers who love to go off road just for the fun of it as well as those who live or work in places with varied road conditions.

"Equipped with a four-speed automatic transmission, the four-wheel-drive Alterra also features Touch-On-The-Fly electronic transfer case—that is, with just a flick of a switch and you're in four-wheel drive while moving—to make off-road driving hassle-free," said IPC VP for dealer network division Ken Takashima.

3-liter engine

Like the other Alterras, the four-wheel-drive variant is also powered by a 3-liter direct-injection turbocharged (with intercooler) engine, a third generation common-rail, direct injection diesel engine that boasts 20 percent improvement in power compared to most diesel engines in its category.

"To make the four-wheel drive Alterra identifiable, IPC made it available in just two distinct colors: alpine white or sterling silver monotone (P1.589 million) and starry black two-tone (P1.599 million). Both colors sports a chrome radiator grille and chrome door handles (the 4x2 variants follow body color) as well as a "4WD" logo sticker on the tailgate door," revealed Takashima.

He also said the four-wheel-drive Alterra is equipped with a single in-dash player (that plays all the popular formats) with DTS and Dolby Digital Decoder, 5.1 Channel Digital Surround, and 10-speaker system with a detachable subwoofer.

GO-ANYWHERE Alterra

Chrysler's classy Town & Country

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

BEFORE I TEST-DROVE THE CHRYSLER Town & Country recently, I was already somewhat familiar with it, having driven a rented one from San Francisco to Los Angeles and back some (many?) years ago. It was a pleasant long drive with my SFO-resident friend, Goya Navarrete, sitting in front as navigator and my two younger daughters seated comfortably in the second row. The Town & Country performed smoothly and gave us no problems. But I do remember thinking that the luggage space behind the third row of seats was rather limited.

Now, I discovered that with the 2005 Town & Country, the Chrysler group has brilliantly solved that shortcoming with its exclusive Stow n' Go seating and storage feature. Stow n' Go allows you to fold the second-row and third-row seats into floor wells in half a minute with a virtually effortless one-hand operation, creating flat floor space big enough (160.7 cubic feet) for large, unwieldy cargo or even a bed.

When the second-row seats are up, its two floor wells become covered bins that offer an additional 12 cubic feet of storage space. Cargo nets fit into each bin, making it easy to quickly remove storage items.

Leadership

With its Stow n' Go and other new features in the 2005 Town & Country, Chrysler aims to consolidate its leadership in the minivan market. Although Chrysler invented the minivan category 20 years ago and has sold more than 10 million, its market share in the US minivan segment is being eroded by challengers such as the Toyota Sienna and Honda Odyssey.

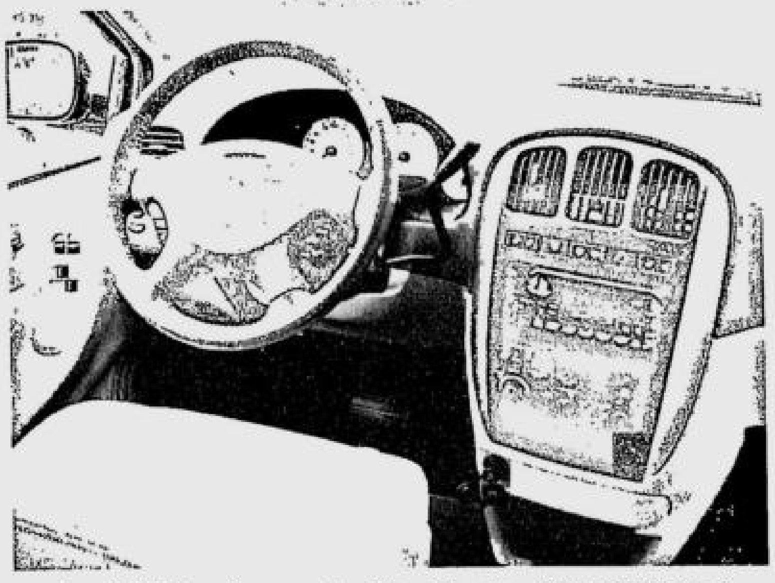
However, this is not to say that Stow n' Go is the Town & Country's only selling point. This seven-seater minivan is loaded with safety features and has earned Five Stars, the US government's highest crash-test rating for side-impact protection. Aside from ABS and advanced multistage front air bags as standard equipment, the Town & Country. Touring edition, which I drove one weekend, also has traction control, a tire pressure monitor, compass and trip computer plus an inflatable knee blocker that deploys together with the air bag, providing additional upper leg protection to the driver and helping to position him relative to the air bag. There are 10 other safety features, but they would take up too much column space if I were to enumerate them.

Strength, refinement and comfort are outstanding. The Town & Country Touring is powered by a 3.8-liter V6 engine producing 215 max bhp at 5,000 rpm and 245 lb-ft max torque at 4,000 rpm. Linked to a silky smooth 4-speed automatic transmission, the V6 engine is strong enough to propel the long-wheel-base edition with graceful ease and even tow a trailer-mounted motorboat if necessary.

Quality

The ride is as comfy as a large car's, with ride quality enhanced by a superbly engineered suspension and super-high-density foam cushion seating originally developed by National Aeronautic Space Administration (Nasa). Just as I had experienced in California years ago, the Town & Country was almost carlike in stability when negotiating turns, steering and maneuverability were excellent despite the vehicle's weight and dimensions, and the brakes (discs on all four) were strong. The estimated average gasoline consumption is around 8 km per liter.

Inside the Touring, an eight-way power driver's bucket seat, a satin-silver instrument panel and leather-wrapped steering wheel with auxiliary controls and tilt await the driver. An AM/FM radio cassette CD with six speakers and a rear air conditioner are also standard equipment. The storage bins under the floor can be removed and cleaned for a variety of uses while the 60/40 split-folding third row seats can be turned around for tailgate seating.



THE COCKPIT of the Town & Country

THE 2005 Town & Country is a class act.

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA

Quiet

The 2005 Town & Country is probably the quietest minivan in the market, NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) in the passenger cabin having been reduced to near-zero level by Chrysler's state-of-the-art "silencer" technology. The cabin's library-like atmosphere enables occupants to easily communicate with one another and contributes to a most refined driving experience.

A roof rack, 16-inch aluminum wheels, power dual sliding doors and power tailgate complete the picture. The sliding doors are controlled by push button while the tailgate is easily opened and closed by pressing the key fob, a convenience that never fails to draw admiring glances from bystanders.

Bottom line, the Town & Country is a class act and currently the best minivan in the market. But the best naturally also commands the highest price: P2,150,000.

* * *

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Win the family car of your dream

WHAT SEPARATES A JOURNEY from a mere trip, a cruise from a mere outing?

That's getting to your destination in the family car of your dreams with your loved ones by your side.

For just as important as your final stop is the travel—the getting there. And what can make it more enjoyable and memorable than to have you and your family comfortably seated inside the perfect family car, enjoying the sights of the outside as you race or leisurely move along?

It doesn't matter if it's just a weekend trip to Tagaytay or a gastronomic feast in Pampanga, a short stop in Bulacan for some native delicacy shopping or visiting the folks back in far-off Ilocos—the trip becomes a journey, the outing becomes an adventure.

Perfect traveling car

And for most families, the new 2006 Audi A4 Avant is the perfect traveling car.

Want enough space to put your fishing and boating gear for a trip to Batangas? No problem about space. The 2006 Audi A4 Avant can comfortably seat a family of six, with enough room for luggage. It is equipped with abundant power to take you and your family long distances.

AUDI A4 Avant

But what makes the new 2006 Audi A4 Avant even more awesome is that it can be had for free. Thanks to BPI Express Credit Card's "Make It Happen" promo, you may now win the car that wins your and your family's hearts.

Joining is easy

And joining is as easy as you being comfortably seated in the 2006 Audi A4 Avant.

Just make a P1,000 purchase and charge it to your Petron-BPI Mastercard. You may even double your chances of winning by getting two entries when you use your Petron-BPI Mastercard in select Petron stations.

And while you're traveling nearer toward that dream car, you can enjoy numerous perks and privileges from using your Petron-BPI Mastercard as well.

For example, do you know that the Petron-BPI MasterCard gives you as much as one free full tank every year with its 2 percent fuel rebate? That's P0.76 savings for every liter of fuel bought! And even in times of fluctuating prices, cardholders can purchase fuel at previous day's prices with its 24-hour price shield feature.

Worry-free travel

You can also enjoy worry-free travel with free roadside assistance and towing services courtesy of Ibero Assistencia.

That's on top of the amazing discounts from CAR Inc., Honda Cars Makati and Goodyear to keep your vehicles in tiptop shape, a 10 percent discount on food and beverages (for a minimum purchase of P600) from Pancake House for a perfect dining experience for you and your family, a 30 percent discount plus free breakfast at Microtel Inns and Suites so you can have the best places to stay in when you're out of town. All these plus zero percent interest on motorcar insurance for 12 months from Standard Insurance.

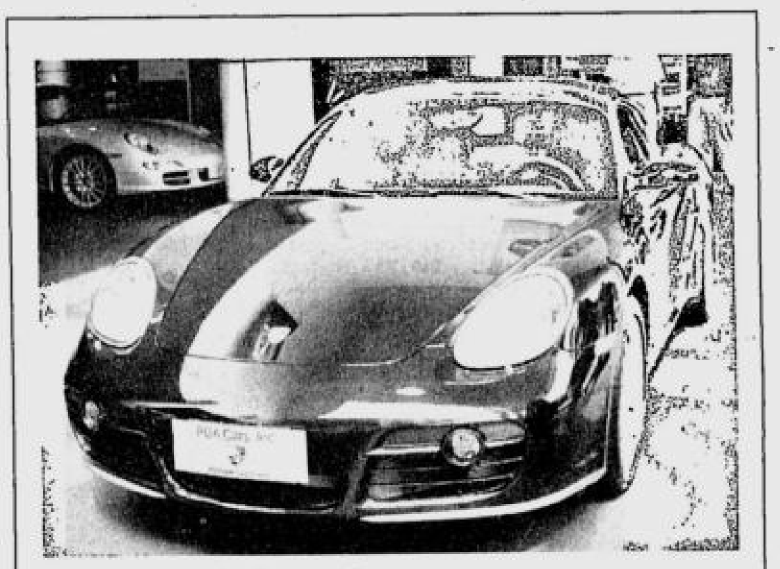
Numerous advantages

If you're not a Petron-BPI Mastercardholder yet, sign up now and get a chance to drive your family in that 2006 Audi A4 Avant and enjoy the numerous advantages of being a BPI Express Credit cardholder as well.

These include superior security against fraud with the Europay MasterCard/VISA-compliant chip, lower finance charges, low foreign currency conversion rates for purchases made abroad, no hidden charges, and payment convenience anytime anywhere via the Express Phone, Express Online, and in over 1,200 ATMs and 700 BPI or BPI Family Bank branches nationwide.

So make that trip a journey and transform that outing into an adventure with the new 2006 Audi A4 Avant. Make it happen with the Petron-BPI Mastercard.

BPI Express Credit's "Make It Happen" promo runs from Nov. 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006.



THE NEW Porsche Cayman S

New Porsche Cayman S launched

PGA CARS, THE SOLE IMporter and distributor of Porsche in the Philippines, has launched the new Porsche Cayman S—the name of Porsche's new sports coupé based on the Boxster model series.

The newest member of the Porsche model range family was revealed to a highly select group of Porsche Club members, Porsche owners and special guests as the highlight of the PGA Cars Porsche Club Sunday December Fun Run and Christmas Brunch Party held at the Carrera Café of the Porsche Center Philippines. Hosted by PGA Cars chair Robert Coyiuto Jr. and president Miguel Coyiuto, the distinctive sports coupé was unveiled to the group of luxury supersports car enthusiasts.

The new Cayman S stands out as a genuine Porsche at very first sight, boasting classic design features reminiscent in part of the Porsche 550 Coupé introduced back in 1953 and the Porsche 904 Carrera GTS Coupé, a legend to this day. At the same time the new sports coupé stands out significantly in its design and proportions from both the Boxster and the 911.

Ranking between the Boxster S and the 911 Carrera, this truly unique mid-engined two-seater sports car is powered by a 295 bhp horizontally opposed six-cylinder accelerating the Cayman S to 100 kph in 5.4 seconds and providing a top speed of 275 kph or 183 mph.

Benefiting from its supreme body stiffness and superb balance of weight with the power unit upfront of the rear axle, the Cayman S is a genuine driving machine able to lap the Northern Circuit of Nürburgring in Germany in just 8:20 minutes—faster than the Boxster S and only a bit slower than the 911 Carrera.

For a more intimate look at the new Porsche Cayman S, you may visit the ultramodern and state-of-the-art PGA Cars Porsche Center Philippines showroom at 201 Edsa, Mandaluyong City. Viewing appointments may be set by calling 727-0145 and 727-0381 up to 85.

Shell introduces global FuelStretch campaign

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN CHOSEN as one of the pilot countries for FuelStretch, a Shell global campaign conceived to help consumers adjust to the realities of the global oil market. The campaign illustrates Shell's commitment to working the hardest to help motorists get the most out of their fuel consumption.

"At Shell, we are constantly working at developing new products, services and promotions that will benefit consumers. FuelStretch is an effort from Shell to help customers cope with the global trend of rising oil prices," said Arlene Manalo, Shell Brand and CVP Cluster team leader for Hong Kong, China and the Philippines.

Shell Global in London has identified the Philippines as one of the countries in Asia that will be the first to roll out the campaign together with Hong Kong and Singapore. Each market has been tasked to adapt the campaign according to local situations and sensitivities. In the Philippines, the FuelStretch campaign will focus on educating motorists and providing innovative fuels at competitive prices.

Educating motorists

As part of the FuelStretch advocacy, Shell is implementing several programs to educate the motoring public.

Shell will be releasing the Shell Fuel Tipid Tips—eight simple steps to minimize fuel consumption by improving the Filipino's driving habits. These are eight easy steps to start with, but expect more to come.

For fleet customers as well as members of their professional drivers loyalty program (Pepeng Pasada), Shell has been conducting driver seminars to improve the driving skills of the professional driver. It will continue to reach out to more drivers nationwide in the coming months.

Coming up soon is the FuelStretch website on www.shell.com.ph, where customers can learn more about the campaign as well as have some fun on an interactive on-line game that teaches consumers ways to maximize their fuel consumption.

Innovative fuels

Shell is the first oil company, globally as well as locally, to offer fuels specially formulated to help you go further. The same fuel experts at the Shell Research Center in England who have designed fuels for Ferrari, have also developed fuels that improve engine efficiency by reducing friction, keeping the engine clean and improving combustion.

High-quality Shell fuels are available to Filipino motorists at competitive prices, offering the best value for money, as attested to by loyal Shell customers.

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SAN JUAN

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East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

AGENCY : **Land Registration Authority;**
POSITION : **Register of Deeds III;**
Salary Grade: **25;**
Place of Assignment : **Region 4;**
Item Numbers : **LRAB-RD3-11 - Quezon Province;**
No. of Vacancies : **1;**

Qualification Standards: Bachelor of Laws (PD 1529); No person shall be appointed Register of Deeds unless he has been admitted to the practice of law in the Phil. and shall have been actually engaged in such practice for at least 3 years or has been employed for a like period in any branch of government the functions of which include the registration of property.

(PDI - Dec. 21, 2005)

RA 9048
14 June 2001
RA form No. 10.1 (LCRO)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Baguio City

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that Mayrose S. Pobre has filed with this Office a petition for Change of First Name from PHIL to MAYROSE in the birth certificate of PHIL M. SALINAS who was born on 15 May 1973 at Magsaysay, Isabela and whose parents are Iluminado Salinas and Beatriz Madriaga.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than 03 January 2006.

(Sgd.) SYLVIA R. LAUDENCIA
City Civil Registrar

(PDI – December 14 & 21, 2005)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-269	2 units Sorter Machine (Deskstop Machine) PLUS: Three (3) Years Maintenance Services	P 30,123,200.00	LBP Funds

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bidding for the above requirements are scheduled on January 11, 2006 at 1:00 PM and pertinent Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P4,000.00.**

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **December 28, 2005** at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to **Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations** (IRR).

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Bank.

(PDI–Dec. 14 & 21, 2005)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ANTONIO Ro. HERRERA has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs before Notary Public BEBENE G. CARRERA of Quezon City as per Doc#150, Page#31, Book# I Series of 2005.
(PDI- Dec. 21, 28 & Jan. 04, 2005)

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IV. **Pediatric Cardiovascular Medicine Department**
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  - ◆ at least passed written examination for Diplomate in Pediatrics

V. **Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Division**
  - ◆ 4 years Residency in General Surgery accredited by PCS (Board eligible)

★ **Deadline for submission of application is on December 28, 2005**
★ **Academic Year 2006 starts on January 1, 2006**

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★ **Academic Year 2006 starts on January 1, 2006**

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Please address your communications to:
ARISTIDES G. PANLILIO, M.D.
Department Manager II
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622 or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. DC 2005-12-011

PRESCRIBING THE GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION OF QUALIFIED THIRD PARTIES (QTPs) FOR PROVISION OF ELECTRIC SERVICE IN REMOTE AND UNVIABLE AREAS, PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 59 AND 70 OF "THE ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY REFORM ACT OF 2001," AND ITS IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS (IRR)

WHEREAS, Section 2 (a) of Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" or "EPIRA", declared the policy of the State to ensure and accelerate the total electrification of the country;

WHEREAS, the Department of Energy (DOE) is tasked to develop and manage the electrification of rural and missionary areas nationwide, and to formulate annually a five (5) year Missionary Electrification Development Plan (MEDP) that will identify among others, the additional capacity in existing missionary areas as well as the facilities to be provided in areas not connected to the transmission system;

WHEREAS, Rule 13 (Missionary Electrification) of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of "EPIRA" or "EPIRA-IRR," mandates the DOE to issue specific guidelines on how to encourage the inflow of private capital and the manner in which other parties can participate in the projects set forth in the MEDP;

WHEREAS, Section 59 (Alternative Electric Service for Isolated Villages) of the EPIRA recogn[illegible] the p[illegible]ision of electric servi[illegible] by Qualified Third Parties (QTPs) in [illegible] [illegible]able areas that [illegible]chised utility is unable to service;

WHEREAS, pursuant to S[illegible]tion 4(p) of Rul[illegible] [illegible]e EPIRA-IRR, the DOE has issued on 20 Februar[illegible] [illegible]004, Department Circular (D[illegible]) No. 2004-02-02 *"Prescribing Guidelines for [illegible]he Formulation of Five-Yea[illegible] Distribution Development Plan (DDP)"* (DDP C[illegible]rcular) which req[illegible] [illegible]ution Utilities (DUs) to, among others, identify and submit [illegible] the list of barangays within their respective franchise areas that a[illegible] [illegible] remote, unviable and cannot be provided with electric servic[illegible] w[illegible] [illegible]xt three (3) years;

WHEREAS, the DOE has likewise issued Department [illegible]ar (DC) No. 2004-06-006 on 18 June 2004 (DOE QTP Qualification Circular), prescribing the qualification criteria for the QTPs that may participate in the provision of electricity to remote and Unviable Areas;

WHEREAS, there is a need to revise and update the qualification criteria and to include the process by which areas shall be selected for the QTP program and for which QTPs will be selected, as set forth in the DOE QTP Qualification Circular;

NOW, THEREFORE, FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FOREGOING PREMISES, the DOE hereby promulgates the following guidelines, expanding and complementing the DOE QTP Qualification Circular for private sector participation in Unviable Areas consistent with the EPIRA and the missionary electrification program of the Government as prescribed in the MEDP.

Section 1. Definition of Terms

(a) ***"Department of Energy"*** or ***"DOE"*** refers to the government agency created pursuant to Republic Act No. 7638 whose expanded functions are provided in the Act;

(b) ***"Distribution Utility"*** or ***"DU"*** as defined by Section 4(q) of the EPIRA refers to any electric cooperative, private corporation, government-owned utility or existing local government unit which has an exclusive franchise to operate a distribution system in accordance with its franchise and the EPIRA;

(c) ***"Energy Regulatory Commission"*** or ***"ERC"*** refers to the independent, quasi-judicial regulatory agency created under Section 38 of EPIRA which shall, among others, promote competition, encourage market development, have exclusive jurisdiction over all cases contesting rates, fees, fines and penalties, as well as fix and approve the Universal Charge imposed on all electricity consumers for purposes provided in the EPIRA;

(d) ***"Full Cost Recovery Rate"*** or ***"FCRR"*** shall refer to the rate, expressed in Peso per kilowatt-hour, that recovers the full efficient costs of generating, distributing and supplying electricity. The FCRR must be sufficient to enable the QTP to operate viably

(e) ***"Generation Company"*** as defined by Rule 4 (ddd) and cross-referenced to Section 70 of the EPIRA IRR refers to any person or entity authorized by the Energy Regulatory Commission to operate facilities used in the generation of electricity;

(f) ***"Missionary Electrification"*** refers to the power generation and associated delivery systems function of NPC-SPUG that shall be funded from the Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification which consists of providing basic electricity service in Unviable Areas with the ultimate aim of bringing the operations in these areas to viability levels, as defined in Rule 4 (ddd) and cross-referenced to Rule 13, Section 1 (a) and (b) of the EPIRA-IRR;

(g) ***"Missionary Electrification Development Plan"*** or ***"MEDP"*** refers to the five- (5) year plan of the DOE, updated annually, to implement the Government's missionary electrification program funded through the share in the Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification;

(h) ***"Missionary Electrification Subsidy"*** refers, for purposes of this Circular, to the funds duly approved by the ERC to cover the difference between the Full Cost Recovery Rate and Subsidized Approved Retail Rate of a Qualified Third Party sourced from the Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification;

(i) ***"Person"*** refers to a natural or juridical person, as the case may be;

(j) ***"Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management Corporation"*** or ***"PSALM"*** refers to the corporation created pursuant to Section 49 of the EPIRA; (as defined in Section 4 (oo) of the EPIRA)

(k) ***"Qualified Third Party"*** or ***"QTP"*** refers to the alternative electric service provider that meets the standards and chosen in accordance with the process set forth in this Circular, duly qualified and authorized by the ERC to serve Unviable Areas pursuant to Section 59 (Alternative Electric Service for Isolated Villages) of the EPIRA and Rule 14 (Provision of Electricity by Qualified Third Parties) of the EPIRA-IRR;

(l) ***"QTP Service Contract"*** refers to the agreement, duly approved by the ERC between NPC and the Qualified Third Party defining the latter's responsibilities in providing the service of missionary electrification in Unviable Areas. This agreement shall set the terms and conditions by which the QTP shall provide the service, such as but not limited to the tariff levels, other electric service charges, the applicable performance and service standards required for qualified third party service providers;

(m) ***"QTP Service Area"*** refers to the geographic area corresponding to the Unviable Area/s where QTP shall provide missionary electrification service;

(n) ***"Renewable Energy Resources"*** refers to energy resources that do not have an upper limit on the total quantity to be used. Such resources are renewable on a regular basis and the renewable rate is rapid enough to consider available over an indefinite time. These include, among others, biomass, solar, wind, hydro and ocean energy;

(o) ***"Subsidized Approved Retail Rate "*** or ***"SARR"*** shall refer to the rate, expressed in Peso per kilowatt-hour, that the ERC has determined to be the maximum that an end-user should pay for power supplied by a QTP. Revenue from the Subsidized Approved Retail Rate combined with the Missionary Electrification Subsidy should put the QTP in the same financial position as if it was able to charge the Full Cost Recovery Rate;

(p) ***"Unviable Area"*** refers to a geographical area within the franchise area of a Distribution Utility where the immediate extension of distribution line is not feasible, as defined by Rule 4 (ssss) of the EPIRA-IRR. For purposes of this Circular, the term "remote and unviable area" in the EPIRA, EPIRA-IRR or other laws or issuances shall mean "Unviable Area" as defined herein; and,

(q) ***"Universal Charge"*** refers to the charge, if any, imposed for the recovery of stranded cost and other purposes pursuant to Section 34 of the EPIRA;

(r) ***"Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification" or "UC-ME"*** refers to the portion of the Universal Charge which designated for Missionary Electrification; and

(s) ***"Waiver Contract"*** refers to the contract entered into between the Distribution Utility and the QTP pursuant to Rule 14 Section 5(a) of the EPIRA IRR wherein the DU transfers the responsibility to service the area described therein. For avoidance of doubt, the franchise of the DU shall not be transferred, abandoned and/or modified with respect to the Unviable Area included therein but only the right to service such area shall be deemed assumed by the QTP.

Section 2. Declaration of Policies

It is hereby declared the policies of the DOE that:

(a) All DUs shall endeavor to provide electricity service to all areas within their respective franchise areas, including remote and unviable areas, in an efficient and sustainable manner consistent with their respective franchises or authorities. Should the DU fail to serve the remote and unviable areas within its franchise area, the same may be opened for private sector participation and included in the QTP program.

(b) All areas identified by the DUs to be remote and unviable shall be declared open for QTP participation by the DOE in consultation with and based on the criteria set forth by the National Electrification Administration (NEA). Upon selection and qualification of the QTP to service a particular area, the concerned DUs shall then transfer its rights to said selected and qualified QTP. No fee for the transfer of rights to serve the Unviable Areas shall be paid to the DU.

(c) The participation as a QTP shall be open to any party, including but not limited to private firms, local government units, cooperatives, non-government organizations, generation companies or their subsidiaries or subsidiaries of DUs who has demonstrated the capability and willingness to comply with the relevant technical, financial, and other requirements through a competitive or transparent process. A DU or its subsidiary shall not be qualified to participate as a QTP for the area/s it has waived.

(d) All QTPs shall adopt least-cost and most efficient technology options in serving Unviable Areas. In determining the QTP, preference shall be given to persons or entities that can offer the least-cost technologies utilizing renewable energy resources.

Section 3. Declaration of Unviable Areas

The DOE hereby adopts the following procedures in the declaration of Unviable Areas:

(a) Classification of Areas. The DU shall classify the unelectrified areas within its franchise between viable and unviable areas. In line with the DDP Circular, the DUs shall comply with the submission of duly accomplished DOE-EPIMB Form No. 03-002 on the list of areas to be waived (attached as Annex "A"), through DOE - Electric Power Industry Management Bureau (DOE-EPIMB).

(b) NEA Verification. NEA shall verify the basis or justification upon which the DUs have selected or nominated remote and unviable areas within its franchise as part of the QTP program. NEA shall submit its proposed evaluation criteria to the DOE for clearance no later than thirty (30) days from the issuance of this Circular and shall thereafter be published in the NEA Bulletin and DOE website at www.doe.gov.ph for information of all DUs concerned.

(c) Consolidation of List of Areas. The DOE-EPIMB, shall consolidate and make available through publication, the list of Unviable Areas that will be offered to QTPs.

(d) Publication of Unviable Areas. The DOE shall declare and publish the list of Unviable Areas not later than September of every year. The list shall also be made accessible to the public through posting in the DOE website at www.doe.gov.ph.

(e) If no candidate QTP submitted an EOI in a particular Unviable Area/s, the request for the submission of EOI shall continue to hold for at least two (2) months from the first publication. In the event that no EOI is submitted within this two (2) month period, the DOE shall include the area/s in its other missionary electrification programs.

Section 4. Procedures for Selecting Candidate QTPs

(a) The publication referred to in Section 3(c) shall serve as the call for "Expression of Interest" (EOI) to all interested parties willing to provide electricity services through QTP participation.

(b) Any person or entities who wish to perform the QTP function in a particular Unviable Area/s shall submit to DOE an EOI which shall include the following:

1. Official Letter of Intent;
2. Profile of the Company or Organization;
3. Relevant registration from Securities and Exchange Commission, Department of Trade and Industry, NEA or Cooperative Development Authority, whichever is applicable; and
4. Other relevant and readily available supporting documents.

(c) The DOE-EPIMB shall receive all EOIs and maintain records of all entities who have expressed interests in serving any remote and unviable area on a per service area basis.

(d) This Circular together with the DOE QTP Qualification Circular shall serve as the documents providing the basis for selecting candidate QTPs. On the basis of the criteria for qualification identified in said Circulars, the DOE-EPIMB shall evaluate the capacity of every applicant based on the documents officially submitted and such additional documents in support the application that may be requested by the DOE-EPIMB.

(e) The DOE shall inform in writing all parties who submitted EOI of the results of its evaluation.

(f) Party/ies that meet the set criteria will be recommended to the DOE Secretary for confirmation as candidate QTPs in respect of a particular service area/s as specified in the EOI.

Section 5. Procedure for the Selection of QTP to Serve Unviable Areas

The following rules shall govern the selection of the QTP:

(a) The DOE shall issue the Request for Proposal (RFP) to all candidate QTPs. The RFP shall establish the process of evaluation and selection of QTP for a particular Unviable Area/s.

For each QTP Service Area, the RFP issued by DOE shall contain the following:

(i) Copy of the Model QTP Service Contract package consisting of the Waiver Contract and Subsidy and Disbursement Agreement (SDA), all duly approved by the ERC;

(ii) Minimum technical and financial requirements, such as:

  a. Minimum hours of continuous electricity service;
  b. Type of technology to be used (optional);
  c. Minimum equity requirements for the project's financial structure; and
  d. Other measures of project feasibility that may be required by the DOE.

(iii) Criteria for evaluation of proposals; and

(iv) Other information deemed necessary by the DOE for a full evaluation of proposals.

(b) The QTP shall then submit the following:

(i) Its proposed QTP Service Area naming the specific Unviable Area/s covered by RFP;

(ii) Outline of the proposal to specify the data requirements but not limited to the following:

  a. Proposed details of the electrification solution or technology to be applied for the target area;
  b. Number of potential and target household connections as well as indicative milestones/schedule of deliverables;
  c. Proposed institutional and commercial arrangements (i.e., meter reading, billing, collection, disconnection policies and procedures, etc.);
  d. Expected date of commissioning/commercial operation of the project;
  e. Proposed FCRR and other charges to end-users; and
  f. Other information/documents to support the applicant's capability to provide efficient and reliable electricity as well as requirements prescribed in Circular No. 2004-06-006.

(iii) Other necessary requirements deemed necessary in the selection process of QTP.

(c) Each candidate QTP shall be given at least forty-five (45) calendar days from the issuance of the RFP to undertake due diligence and prepare the proposal (Due Diligence Period). Final and detailed proposals shall be submitted to and received by the DOE-EPIMB not later than five (5) working days after the last day of Due Diligence Period.

(d) The QTP selection process shall be completed within sixty (60) days from receipt of a complete and final proposal and all necessary documents by the candidate QTPs. The DOE shall notify in writing each candidate QTP that submitted proposals of the results of the selection process, indicating therein, as applicable, the particular Unviable Area/s that comprise the QTP Service Area/s.

(e) The DOE shall advise the candidate QTP to commence the negotiation for the signing of the QTP Service Contract with the NPC-SPUG. The DOE and NEA shall facilitate and assist the candidate QTP in finalizing and signing the Waiver Contract with the concerned DU.

(f) After the signing of QTP Service Contract and related documents, the DOE shall endorse the candidate QTP with complete requirements to ERC for final qualification and authorization consisting of the issuance of all necessary permits and/or licenses and approval of tariffs to be passed on by the QTP to its end-users in the QTP Service Area.

(g) In the case there is more than one QTP proposal received to serve a particular area/s, the DOE-EPIMB shall give preference to the proposal that can offer the most number of connections or highest level of electric service at lower cost applicable to a particular Unviable Area/s.

(h) In the case there is only one QTP proposal received to serve a particular area/s, the DOE-EPIMB shall publish in the DOE website at www.doe.gov.ph for at least one (1) month from the publication date such relevant information on the proposal and invite other entities to match the offer.

Section 6. Rates and Subsidies for Unviable Areas

(a) For the duration of the term of the QTP Service Contract, the QTP shall be deemed to be performing the missionary electrification service on behalf of NPC-SPUG with respect to the QTP Service Area.

(b) The DOE through NPC-SPUG consistent with its MEDP, shall petition the ERC to grant a UC-ME subsidy fund for QTPs.

(c) The QTP shall be eligible for subsidy with respect to its QTP Service Area in the event that the Full Cost Recovery Rate (FCRR) is determined to be higher than the Subsidized Approved Retail Rate (SARR) with respect to said area/s. The difference in the FCRR and the SARR shall be the computed Missionary Electrification Subsidy based on a per connection system.

(d) Payment or disbursement of UC-ME subsidy shall conform with the ERC-approved guidelines and procedures governing the remittances and disbursements of the Universal Charge developed and managed by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM), and to the subsidy disbursement mechanism to be included in the SDA for ERC approval.

(e) Every year, the DOE shall incorporate in its MEDP the list of duly authorized QTPs and their corresponding subsidy requirements.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Qualified Third Party

(a) Meet the qualification criteria set by the DOE in the RFP;

(b) Secure from ERC relevant permits and licenses, including authority to charge its rates, in order to commence providing services in its respective area/s;

(c) Comply with all the provisions, including the financial, technical, environmental and other performance standard of the QTP Service Contract entered into with NPC-SPUG;

(d) Submit periodic reports to ERC on its financial and technical performance pursuant to Rule 14 of the EPIRA-IRR;

(e) Operate and maintain its facilities to provide services in the QTP Service Area in an efficient and sustainable manner;

(f) Submit periodic reports to DOE on the status of its electrification program and the completed number of connections; and

(g) As applicable and with prior authority from ERC, charge and collect UC from all end-users within the QTP Service Area and remit the same to the DU or the National Transmission Corporation, as the case may be, in accordance with law.

Section 8. Responsibilities of a Distribution Utility in Areas served by the Qualified Third Party

(a) Extend assistance to the QTP serving a QTP Service Area within its franchise; such assistance to include but not be limited to securing the necessary rights of way, site acquisition, and coordination with concerned local agencies.

(b) Finalize and execute a Waiver Contract with the QTP with respect to the Unviable Area/s within its franchise.

Section 9. Responsibilities of NPC-SPUG

(a) Ensure that the QTP shall serve its respective QTP Service Area by providing adequate and reliable electric service and performing in accordance with the standards set in the QTP Service Contract.

(b) Review, finalize and execute the QTP Service Contract and Subsidy Disbursement Agreement with the selected QTP, in accordance with this Circular and ERC Guidelines on QTP.

(c) Apply with the ERC for the approval of the SARR and the Missionary Electrification Subsidy.

(d) Submit periodic reports to ERC on QTP performance relative to its compliance with the terms of QTP Service Contract and ERC guidelines.

(e) Submit periodic reports to ERC and PSALM on the disbursement and utilization of the UC-ME.

(f) Unless otherwise provided in the MEDP or an alternative arrangement with the affected DU, act as the service provider of last resort in case the QTP fails to fulfill its obligations to serve the areas awarded to the QTP.

Section 10. Responsibilities of DOE

(a) Monitor rate of electrification for each QTP Service Area.

(b) Conduct the QTP selection process, in coordination with the Technical Working Group formed pursuant to Section 12 herein, in accordance with this Circular and the RFP.

(c) Determine and incorporate in the MEDP the QTP projects and corresponding UC-ME requirements, if any, in payment of the Missionary Electrification Subsidy.

Section 11. Responsibilities of NEA

(a) Establish the criteria for verification of areas submitted or nominated by the DUs as remote and unviable areas for clearance by the DOE, in accordance with Section 3(b) of this Circular.

(b) Evaluate and verify the areas submitted by DUs as remote and unviable and submit its recommendations to the DOE in accordance with Section 3 of this Circular.

(c) Assist the DOE in monitoring of the rate of electrification by the QTP of the different QTP Service Areas.

Section 12. Miscellaneous Provisions

(a) The DOE shall form a Technical Working Group composed of representatives from DOE, NPC-SPUG, NEA, and PSALM to conduct, among others, the evaluation of proposals and recommend thereafter the candidate QTP to serve the Unviable Areas.

(b) The DOE shall inform the ERC in writing of any significant variations between the executed QTP Service Contract and related agreements and the ERC pre-approved Model QTP Service Contract and related agreements.

(c) The DOE shall assist NPC-SPUG in the preparation of the latter's proposal to ERC for approval a uniform Subsidized Approved Retail Rate for the purpose of determining the corresponding amount of Missionary Electrification Subsidy that each QTP shall be entitled to receive from NPC-SPUG.

(d) To encourage investments and private sector participation in Unviable Area/s, the DOE shall coordinate with the ERC on the appropriate rate setting methodology that will provide for the QTPs full cost recovery of the investments incurred or to be incurred including the cost to cover their operation in the QTP Service Areas.

(e) Consistent with Section 1(d) of Rule 13 of the EPIRA-IRR, the DOE shall include in the preparation of MEDP all the electrification projects to be undertaken by the QTPs in Unviable Areas for possible subsidy allocation to be funded through UC-ME.

(f) The DOE, in consultation with the Technical Working Group, shall adopt a transition mechanism to govern existing waived areas and community-based organizations and provide for the inclusion of the same in the QTP program. For this purpose:

(i) Areas that are currently served by the DUs but are deemed unviable on account of huge operating costs may be offered by the concerned DUs for inclusion in the list of Unviable Areas or to be clustered with the Unviable Areas for inclusion QTP Program.

(ii) Subject to any guidelines that the ERC may issue, private sector-driven or community-based electrification projects which do not require subsidy from the UC-ME may proceed with the service provided that the proponents/operators shall notify the DOE within three (3) months from the Effective Date of this Circular.

Section 13. Repealing Clause

All pertinent issuances, circulars and memoranda inconsistent with this Circular are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

Section 14. Saving Clause

(a) If for any reason, any provision of this instrument/circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

(b) The implementation of this Circular shall not exempt the parties from existing government rules and regulations, and applicable government agency circulars or issuances.

Section 15. Effectivity.

This Circular shall take effect within fifteen (15) days upon publication in newspaper of general circulation.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P.M. LOTILLA**
Secretary

Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 12 December 2005.

(PDI--Dec. 21, 2005)

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The Officer-in-Charge, Deputy Directors,
other Officials and Personnel of the
NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI)
deeply mourn the passing away of

Gen. Reynaldo G. Wycoco

November 10, 1946 – December 19, 2005
NBI Director

The remains will be brought to the NBI gym
at noon of December 21, 2005.

Interment will be on December 24, 2005
at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani
after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the NBI.

We, the family of the late

FELICIDAD D. MADRID

of Biwas, Tanza, Cavite

March 7, 1910 – December 11, 2005

wish to thank all who have condoled us in our bereavement. Your sympathy and Mass cards, flower offerings, and most especially your kind words of consolation have greatly eased our pain at the loss of our loved one.

In Loving Memory of

JESUS MASILANG SORIANO

of Gapan City, Nueva Ecija

Now peacefully rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord with his wife, Angela on December 15, 2005 at the age of 81.

His loving sons and in-laws **Jun & Suzette Zalamea, Auggie & Bebot Reynoso,** and **Mark & Karen Talusan;**
grandchildren, **Ina, Jag, Ica, Jed, Isa, Celine, Jason, Anton, Joseph, Michael** and **Jacob;**
great-grandchild, **Alexa,** brother **Angel,** relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Gapan City, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be at Gapan Memorial Garden on Wednesday, 21 December 2005 after the 2:00 pm Mass at the Divina Pastora Shrine, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija.

"In peace I shall both lie down and sleep for You alone Lord make me secure." (Psalm 4:9)

Estelelita "Telly" R. Ocampo

September 09, 1942 - December 19, 2005 (CHS-HS-1961)

Peacefully joined her Creator
on December 19, 2005 at the age of 63.

Her beloved husband Rody; children Jay, Mon & AC, Weng, Api (†), Ina & Jat; grandchildren Mica, Miguel, Reeana, Reine & Raffy; brother, sisters, brothers-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City.

Interment to be announced later.

Agnes Dinsay Gustilo-Aquino

Peacefully joined her Lord & Creator
on December 13, 2005.

Her loving family; mother Emma Dinsay Gustilo; brothers & sisters Rodolfo, Benjamin, Antonio, Lourdes, Jose Maria, Josue, Emmanuel, Celeste, Lucas & Steve request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

The body rests at Forest Lawn Memorial Chapels at Covina California, USA.

For interment details contact:
Josegus@yahoo.com

**I have
fought the
good fight,
I have finished
the race,
I have
kept the faith**
(2 Timothy 4)

**"For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten
Son, that whoever believes in Him
shall not perish but have
everlasting life."**
John 3:16

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

**DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS**

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

★ ★ ★

GENERAL REYNALDO GATBUNTON WYCOCO

November 10, 1946 – December 19, 2005

"Love in the open hand, no thing but that,
Ungemmed, unhidden, wishing not to hurt,
As one should bring you cowslips in a hat
Swung from the hand, or apples in her skirt,
I bring you, calling out as children do:
'Look what I have! -- And these are all for you.' "

-- Edna St. Vincent Millay

His bereaved wife Luci, children Patricia & Pol, Voltaire, Miko & Mia, Vlad,
and grandchildren Mickey, Martina and Gabby
request for prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

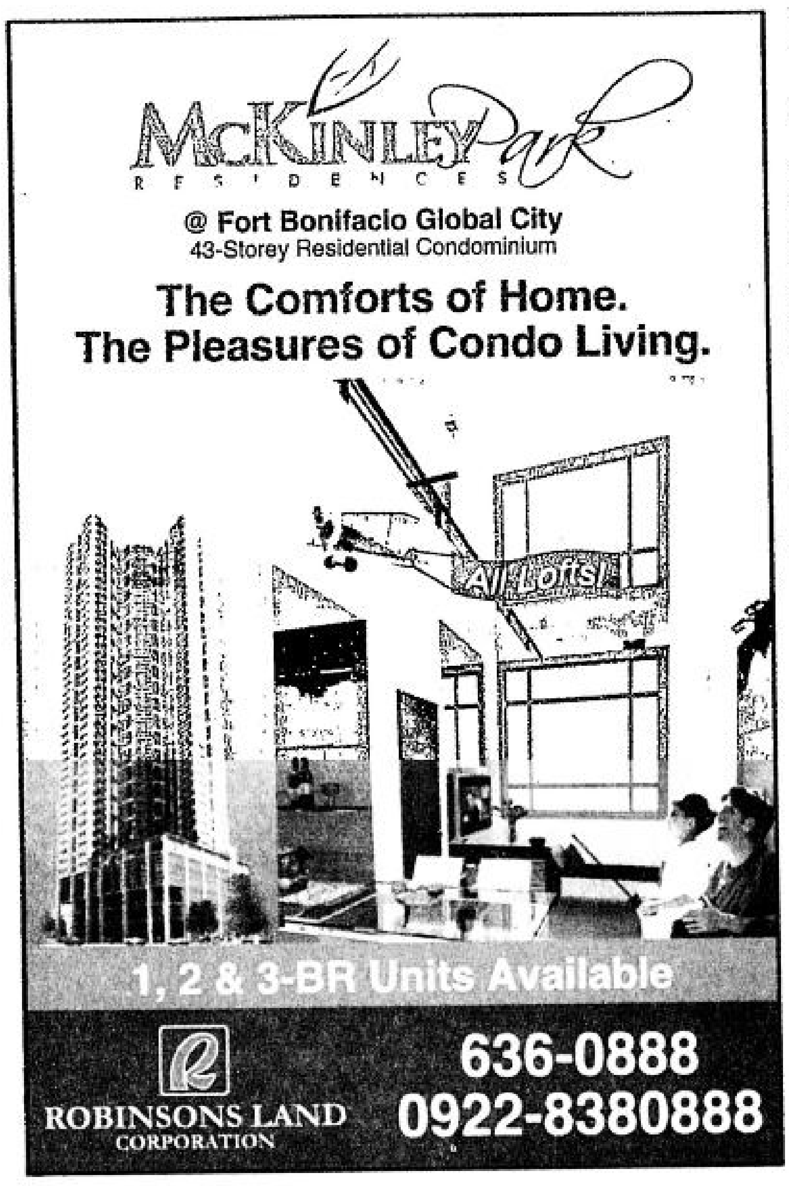
His remains will lie in state as follows:
3:00PM December 20 to 12:00 NN December 21 at the Camp Crame Multi-Purpose Hall
1:00PM December 21 to 9:30 AM December 24 at the NBI Gymnasium

He will be laid to rest on December 24, 2005 at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City after the 8:30 AM Funeral Mass at the NBI Gymnasium, NBI Complex Taft Ave. Manila

BUSINESS

IMF backs gov't policy on documentary stamps

BIR confident of meeting revenue target with DBCC circular



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By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund has backed the government's policy to allow taxes collected from various state-owned agencies, such as documentary stamp taxes, to be counted as part of government revenues.

In a recent discussion paper, the IMF said: "It is strongly recommended to record both cash and non-cash transactions, especially in light of the Philippines' plans to move to accrual accounting and GFSM (Government Finance Statistics Manual) 2002."

The Bureau of Internal Revenue yesterday said that with the new policy, it would be able to meet its revenue collection target of P546.9 billion this year.

The policy is embodied in the circular by the Development Budget Coordinating Committee, which allows payment for DST on government securities to form part of the BIR's revenue collections.

"It should be noted that not reflecting the revenue is illegal as it amounts to granting a tax exemption to the transaction without the authority of Congress," said BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Bunag.

"...Even the IMF (as BIR collection) agrees that the revenue should be reflected unless the buyer of the treasury notes or bonds is the bond sinking fund of the national government," he added.

Under the DBCC order, the BIR can count as part of its tax collection the Special Release Allotment Order of the Bureau of Treasury for the payment of documentary stamp taxes due on the sale of government securities.

Under the same circular, the Bureau of Customs could also count as part of its collection the import duties paid by government agencies, such as those paid by the National Food Authority for rice imports.

The DBCC circular is supported by the IMF because this will allow the government to accurately reflect tax collections from the different government agencies and state-owned companies.

BUÑAG

The previous practice put pressure on the tax effort ratio as tax revenues were deemed understated while the DST, as part of the government's financial transactions, is included in the computation of the gross domestic product.

In the case of DST, it will be counted as a payment, therefore part of the revenue collection by the BIR. But it will also be reflected as expenditures by the issuer, usually the Bureau of Treasury.

In the case of import duties, these will be counted as revenue collection by the Bureau of Customs, but will be reflected as government subsidy in the tax expenditure fund.

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Foreign investments flowing to Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—FOREIGN DIRECT investments are flowing into Mindanao, according to the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

Medco figures showed that FDI to Mindanao, mostly from Japanese companies, surpassed local investments during the first six months of the year.

This was the first time since 2001 that foreign investments surpassed local money since 2001, the report said.

Medco said FDI reached P892 million in the first half of the year, or 68 times higher than last year's P13 million.

Japan was the single biggest source of foreign investments, accounting for 39 percent of the total.

These include additional investment worth P520 million made by the Philippine Sinter Corp. in Misamis Oriental, one of the largest overseas investments of Kawasaki Steel Corp.

The Canadian-owned mining firm, TVI Resources Development Philippines Inc., came in second with an investment of P225 million.

South Korean firm DV Esplus Company Ltd., a manufacturer of automobile oil filters poured in P37 million, while German-owned Biofaser Fibers Inc., a manufacturer of coco coir products, brought in P15 million.

Medco said foreign investments accounted for 54 percent of the total investments in Mindanao.

With FDI and domestic investments combined, Medco said the total investments to Mindanao reached P1.6 billion, up 260 percent from January to June this year compared with P460 million in the same period last year.

Local investments also posted a positive growth after a slump in the first quarter last year.

From P443 million last year, local investments grew 74 percent to P771 million this year according to the agency.

Other local investments approved early this year include the P200-million poultry farms venture of Maharlika Agro-Marine Ventures Corp. in Bukidnon and Davao City; the P100-million semi-refined carrageenan project of Martsons Food Corp. in Davao City; the P57-million cold storage plant of San Andres Fishing Industries Inc. in Tambler, General Santos City; the P17-million contact center of G-Com Ltd. (Asia Pacific) Inc. in Davao City; the P10-million wood-based manufacturing project of Uniwood Manufacturing Corp. in Davao City; and the P6-million banana processing venture of Southern Davao Solid Manufacturing Corp. in Davao City.

Meanwhile, Jollibee Food Corp. opened its fifth and newest branch here on Tuesday.

Jose Emilio Munsayac, Jollibee marketing manager here, said the new store was the second Jollibee outlet constructed here this year.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao and Medco chair Sec. Jesus Dureza said the influx of foreign and local investments in the island showed the economic potential of Mindanao.

Mindanao has attracted huge investments, particularly in agriculture, due to the rich soil, the mild weather and the rich natural resources.

The region is considered the food basket of the Philippines and is also the center of the fishing industry. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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WEDNESDAY,
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Take the cue from the dedicated individuals and groups who won HSBC and Hands On Manila's search for the Faces of Volunteerism.

In this issue, we also highlight certain organizations that you might be interested in joining. If saving the environment's your thing, there's Greenpeace. Show your love for animals by working with Peta, and fight poverty with Rock Ed.

We also give you a list of 100 ways you can change the world—because there are just so many ways to make an impact on other people and this planet's future.

To inspire you even more, we'll also tell you about 2bU!'s big Christmas project and how much love and generosity people—our peers—have to share. Because no one is too young to make a difference.

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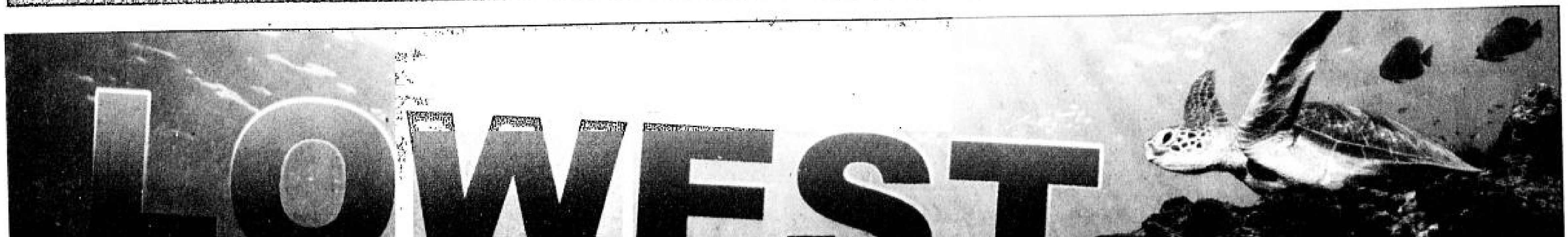

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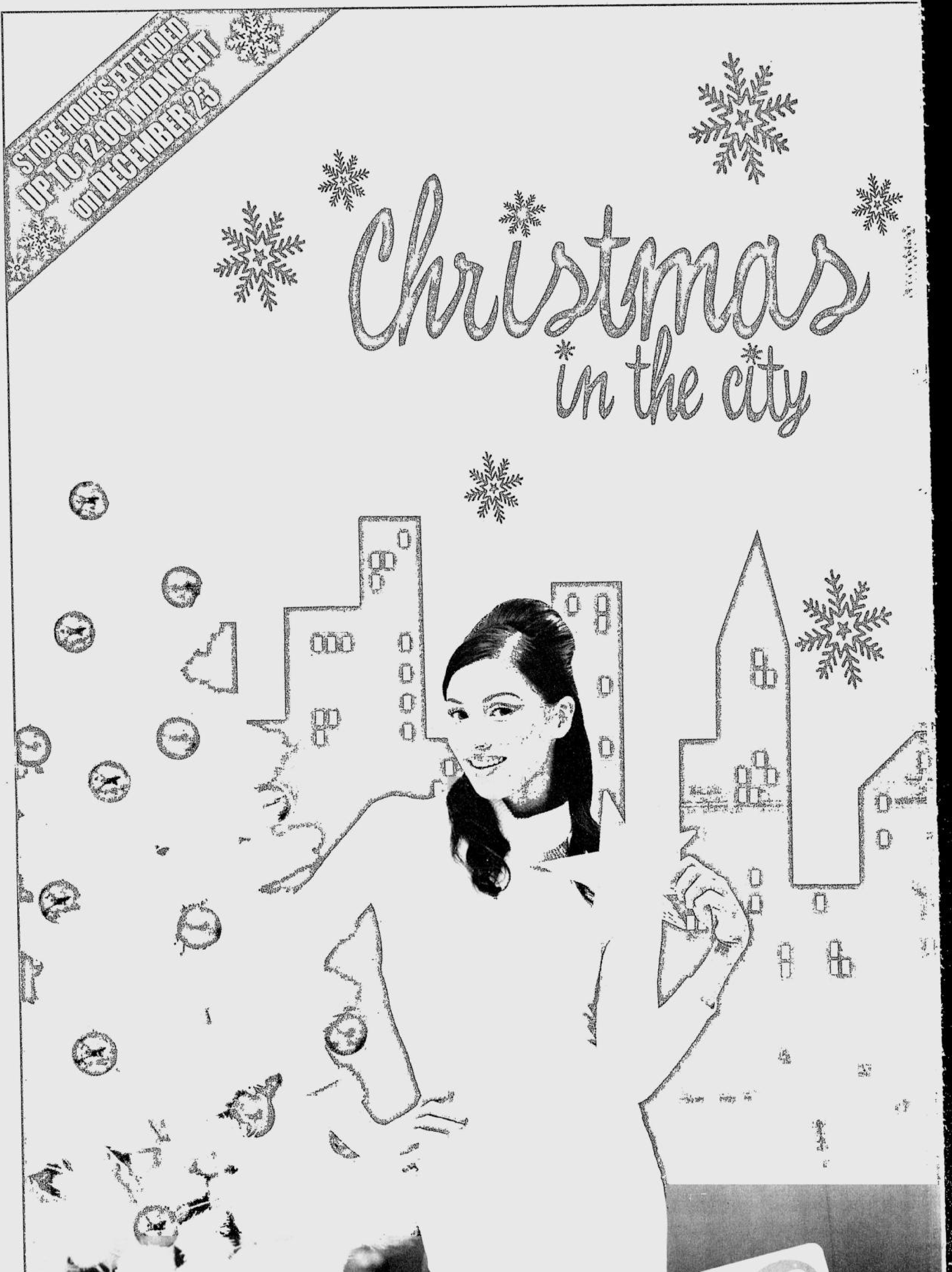
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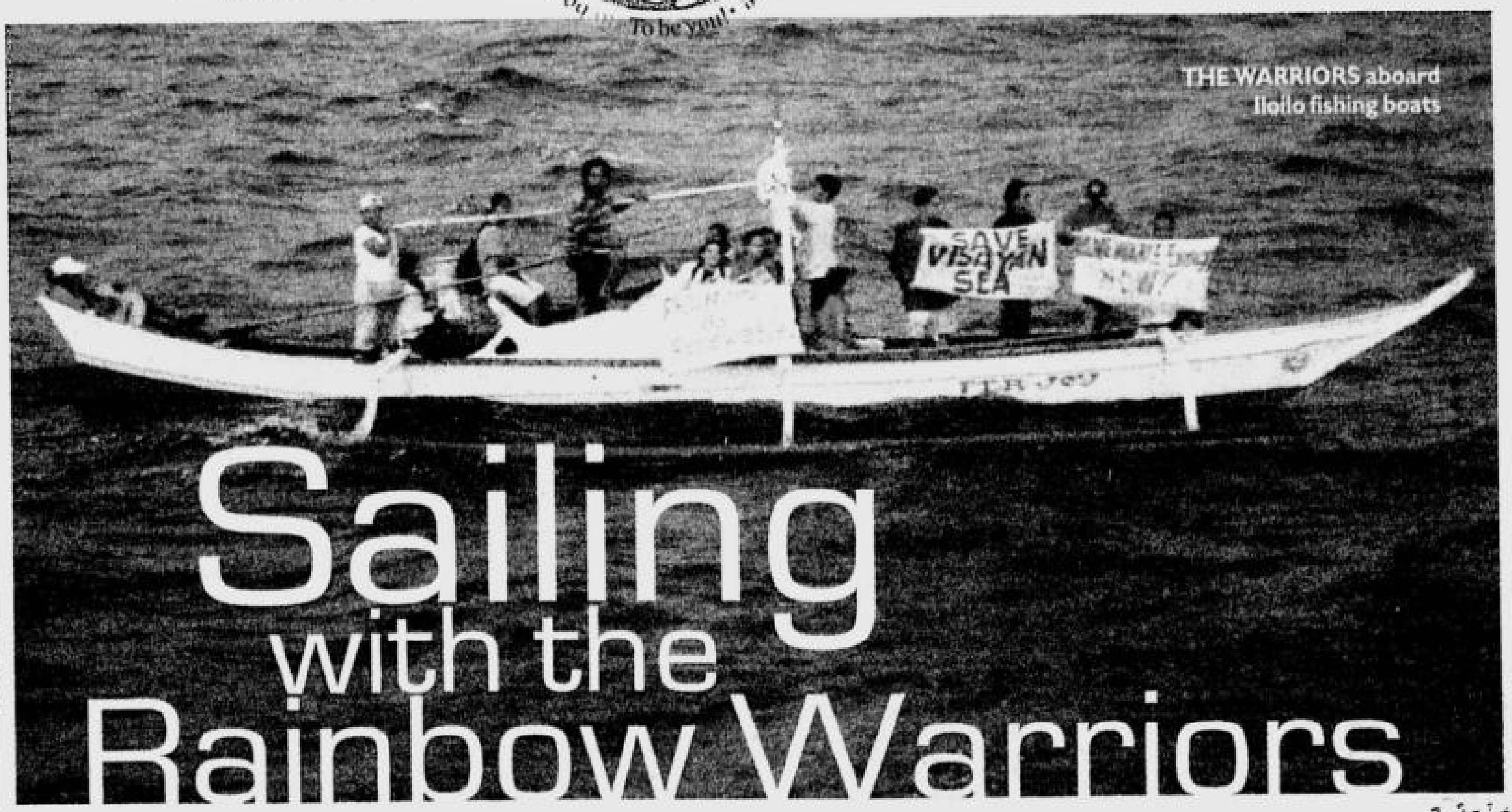
THE WARRIORS aboard Iloilo fishing boats
SAVE VISAYAN SEA

Sailing with the Rainbow Warriors

By Ala Paredes
2bU! Contributor

ARE YOU DEEPLY concerned that our planet is in critical condition? Do you believe in taking creative, direct and head-on action for Mother Earth? Do you believe it's time to take the fight to save the environment across corporate, political and international borders?

If your answer is yes to all of these, then Greenpeace may be the organization for you.

This year, Greenpeace made the Philippines one of the stops on its Asia Energy Revolution Ship Tour. The mission: combat dirty energy sources and sound the alarm on the planet's biggest threat, climate change.

When I found out the Greenpeace boat was set to dock in Manila Bay for two days to open itself to the public, I immediately volunteered to be a tour guide on board for a day. Imagine my surprise when, a few days later, I was invited by regional campaign manager Red Constantino to sail with the Rainbow Warrior on its Visayas leg!

THE AUTHOR having a fun time polishing the compass wheel.

My duty was to document my experience of working with Greenpeace on my blog.

Prophecy

The Rainbow Warrior is so named because of an old American-Indian prophesy about a mythical race of people descending from a rainbow to save the earth from illness.

I knew it was a rare opportunity to join the Rainbow Warrior on its tour, but I didn't know just how rare it was until I discovered that even long-time Greenpeace members had never gone on board the ship.

So one balmy evening, after a day of touring people around the ship, my little laptop and I boarded the Rainbow Warrior to set sail for the Visayas from Manila Bay.

On board with me were some local Greenpeace members, other volunteers like me, and of course, the 15 official members of the international Rainbow Warrior crew, who are sailors-cum-environmental activists.

Greenpeace is often misconstrued as a bunch of tree-hugging hippies or troublemakers, but a glimpse of life on the Rainbow Warrior shows that being an environmental activist is serious business.

Life on a ship is a busy life. There is always something that needs to be done. The crew members work hard all day long, from the captain, the first and second mates, the deckhands, the radio master, the cook, etc. Everyone has an assigned task or duty, and if you are not assigned one, it's best to take the initiative and ask if anything needs to be done.

That's how I found myself washing dishes, chopping vegetables, mopping floors, wiping tables, helping unload supplies, and polishing the ship's huge brass compass during my stay.

Also, contrary to what the news or papers might say, Greenpeace activists don't just jump recklessly into unplanned action. Crew members are specially trained in nonviolent direct action, and are highly organized. Each time they stage a protest, they risk danger, violence and being arrested. It's no joke; it's a job that requires exemplary dedication.

First stop

Since part of our Visayas campaign was to show support and bear witness to communities fighting for clean energy, our first stop was the municipality of Concepcion, Iloilo, where we were welcomed by about 50 small fishing boats as we sailed into the municipality's waters.

We welcomed on board the leaders of a group called Coalfree (Concepcion Alliance for Renewable Energy). Its members were campaigning against a coal plant that was about to be built in their area.

As we docked in Iloilo, we were greeted by a huge welcome committee. We spent the day giving open boat tours to the public. Aside from blogging and cleaning the ship, another one of my assigned duties was to orient, organize and station the local volunteer tour guides on the boat.

Before we left Iloilo, the community threw us a big baile to show solidarity with our cause. It was Filipino hospitality at its best!

Our next stop was Pulupandan, Negros, the first community in all of Asia to win a battle against a proposed coal plant in its area. We were met on the pier by cultural dancers, Mayor Luis Mundia, and a group campaigning for the use of solar power called "The Solargen Youth." Again, we opened the Rainbow Warrior to the public.

The final leg of the trip was Bacolod, another province concerned about the impact of climate change and which hopes to rely completely on clean energy sources in the future. It's amazing how awareness of environmental issues is more evident in our provinces than in the city!

We were welcomed to the "City of Smiles" by the press, The Solargen Youth, and a host of colorful maskara dancers. As usual, I helped supervise open-boat tours with the local volunteers. And as a final celebration of Greenpeace's campaign, we were given a farewell party by the Solargen Youth and members of the community.

Battle

Working with and meeting so many individuals dedicated to fighting climate change, both foreign and Filipino, were eye-opening and fulfilling experiences. And as I have witnessed, it is outside the confines of Metro Manila where the battle to save Mother Earth truly rages.

I was lucky to be invited onboard the ship, but there are dozens of other ways you can volunteer for Greenpeace locally. You don't even have to be an activist to make a difference.

You can start by e-mailing the local office at greenpeace.philippines@ph.greenpeace.org. Or if you know a friend who works for Greenpeace, you can ask him or her how to sign up and be kept up to date with local actions and activities.

For more of my Greenpeace trip, visit www.greenpeace.org/seasia/en/news/alaism_rw_blog. Greenpeace's website is www.greenpeace.org/seasia/en/

Log on to www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/climate-change/take_action/12_steps for 12 clever ways on how to conserve energy at home!

> Working with and meeting so many individuals dedicated to fighting climate change were eye-opening and fulfilling experiences

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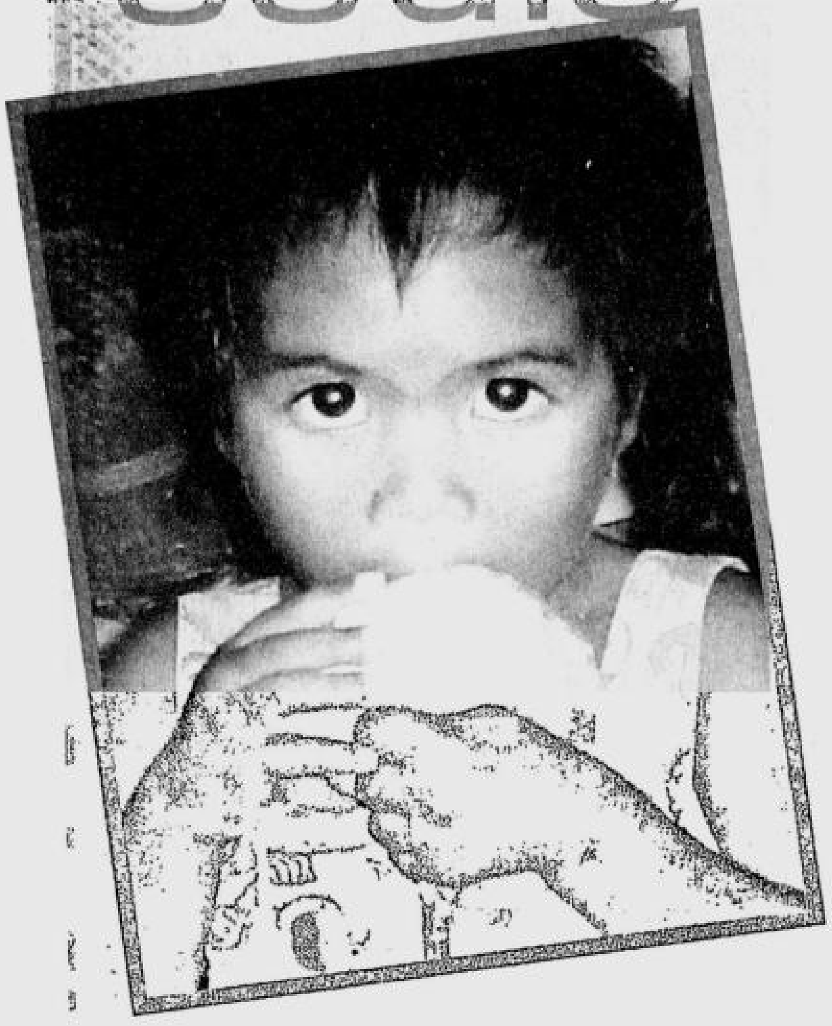
Kitchen soup for children's souls

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan and Pam Pastor

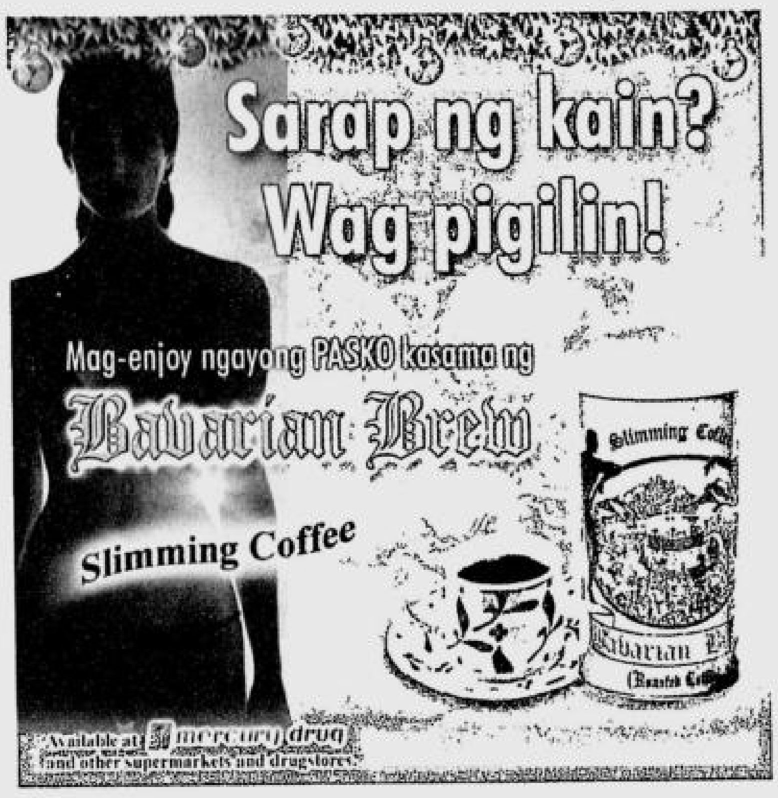


It started with an e-mail and turned into an outpouring of love and generosity

DESPITE OUR MULTIPLE inboxes, despite spammers and junk mail, some e-mails just reach out, touch you and refuse to let go. Judge Lorenzo Veneracion's e-mail did just that.

He wrote, "I am now a retired Manila RTC Judge, who, for almost 15 years now, has been

KITCHEN/ D2



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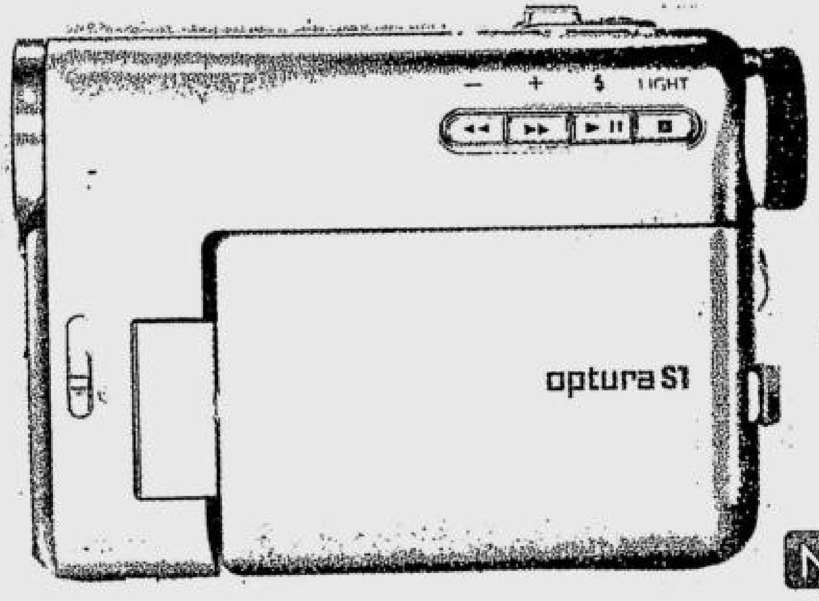

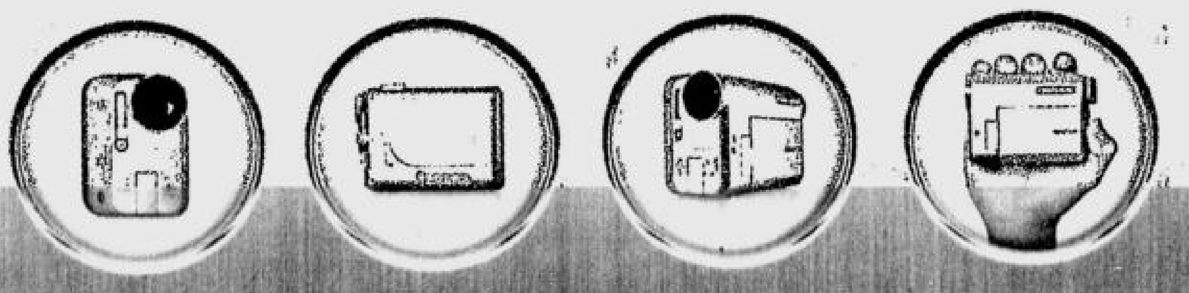

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THE KIDS all eagerly participate in the games.

INQUIRER marketing team, 2bU! Interns and kids from Payatas

Kitchen soup for children's souls

THE AUTHOR with Judge Lore

CAMERA SHY. Not.

THE KIDS love posing for the cameras.

EATING their nutritious meal of rice and vegetables

INQUIRER's Chris Vida and Ling Perez help the volunteer moms in the kitchen.

ROBBIE Francisco of Stratworks, Liza Latinazo of Star Group Ltd. and INQUIRER's Hazel Soriaga

INQUIRER's Joseph Fua helps serve lunch.

From page D1

working for disadvantaged children of Payatas in Quezon City—feeding them, educating them and empowering their families to be more productive so they can live with dignity, confidence and self-respect."

He told us about the Foundation for Soup Kitchen, Food Bank and Training Center Inc. and the Lighthouse Center for Children Foundation Inc., of which he is president and executive trustee. Both are non-stock, nonprofit groups that are licensed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and accredited by the QC government.

He told us about writing to possible sponsors and politicians asking them for support, and how these people never reply. They're feeding around 2,000 children a day (with the help of Rustan's Supermarket which has been donating their second-harvest fruits and vegetables). But their goal is to be able to feed 5,000 kids regularly in the 13 centers they have around the QC area.

Then came the part that really hit us. "The cost of our feeding is P2.75 per child per day."

Only P2.75. So many of us take that amount for granted.

Before we finished reading the e-mail, we had made up our minds. We were going to do what we could to help feed the children of Payatas.

We continued corresponding with Judge Lore for a few weeks and researched about the project before we set our plans into action.

Goal

We set a goal in our minds. Judge Lore said that to feed 5,000, the soup kitchen would need P13,750. We told ourselves we'd try our best to raise that amount. It might be a long shot, but we'd try.

I composed a message and posted it on my blog. I also posted it as my first-ever Friendster bulletin and e-mailed it to a lot of people inside and outside the INQUIRER office. "I am writing to ask for your help...," the message began.

Within minutes, people had responded. People posted it on their own blogs and on websites and they forwarded it to their friends. E-mails inquiring about how they could help started streaming in.

The remarkable thing about it was it was already past midnight. There really isn't a right or a wrong time to help and reach out.

Blur of kindness

The next days passed by in a blur of kindness, love and generosity. It was so overwhelming that there were moments I had to fight back tears.

Our inbox was flooded with messages. "I'm pledging a sack of rice," a virtual stranger e-mailed, asking us to pick it up from her *sari-sari* store.

"I'll give a donation for 1,000 children," an editor of this paper wrote.

"Can we deposit the money?" others asked. Some wanted to know if they could volunteer at the soup kitchen.

The usually uneventful walk from the front door of our building to my desk would often be interrupted by people handing me P500 bills for the kids. And there were more donations waiting at my desk, even from people I'd never met face to face.

The winners of the presentation showdown at the Inquirer Anniversary party pledged half of their P15,000 prize.

A number of INQUIRER employees pooled their money and bought a sack of rice. When I told INQUIRER President Sandy Prieto-Romualdez about it, she said, "It warms my heart and makes me doubly proud to be working with people who have a big heart. I've seen this spirit every time we have projects that need volunteers." We couldn't agree more.

Even 2bU! correspondents who are now busy with their day jobs gave their time to help. Margot Tan, now with Unilever, hooked us up with the people of Knorr who promptly pledged to donate whatever products the soup kitchen needed. Giles Ivan Aquino who is now with Accenture, Maui Reyes who now works for BBDO, and Jason Doplito who is with Global Sources all collected donations from their big-hearted officemates.

People we've met in the context of our work for 2bU! readily shared their blessings, too. Sherrie Gotauco, the owner of Freeway, Ensembles and Solo and whose husband was one of the people who started First Choice Food Corp., had 50 big sacks of biscuits delivered to the office.

Within an hour of our e-mail, Ben Chan, the CEO of Bench, had pledged P10,000, no questions asked.

No stopping

We couldn't stop talking about the great response from people. INQUIRER Libre editor-in-chief and volunteerism advocate Chito de la Vega said, "Most people would want to help. All you have to do is give them a chance. Always believe in the kindness in people's hearts."

The donations didn't stop there. After closing INQUIRER Super! last Thursday, Tim Yap nonchalantly handed me a check for P12,000.

In just a few days, we had hit our goal and we even exceeded it.

We kept in close touch with Judge Lore the entire time, giving him updates. We were all excited about our trip to the soup kitchen.

There are other ways to help, Judge Lore said. The soup kitchen also needs volunteers to become community health advocates, to visit homes of the poor to learn how we could help them, to work with families, to teach parenting and budgeting, to help create jobs, make business plans, learn marketing skills, to get things rolling, to guide young people through troubled times and to teach them computer skills, sewing and other household skills.

SHINING HAPPY people

Then came the part that really hit us—the cost of our feeding is P2.75 per child per day

STAR GROUP Ltd.'s marketing manager Sasa Tan Carlos sings carols with the kids

THE BEST part was being with the kids.

JUDGE Lore and one of the NGO's scholars who is now in fourth grade

All there

Last Friday, we went to the main center in Pilot Area, Barangay Commonwealth, QC. There, 2bU! interns Rhiz Biñas, Roxanne Gay Nofies and Jeffrey Osoc were the first to arrive, bringing with them the 19 cases of products from Knorr.

Then came our friends from Stratworks who brought products from their client, Universal Robina Corp., the makers of Jack & Jill. People from Star Group Ltd. were there, too, with sacks of rice and bags and bags of groceries they had bought for the kids.

"Our office is closed, we're all here!," Sasa Tan Carlos, their marketing manager, cheerfully said. INQUIRER's Marketing Team, led by Hazel Soriaga, 2bU!'s brand manager, was there in full force, too.

We were welcomed by Judge Lore, the volunteer moms and about 200 kids. The kids greeted us cheerfully.

It was one thing to collect donations and talk about the project. But it was a totally different thing to come face to face with the kids we had wanted to help.

One girl led a prayer that was repeated by all the other kids. "*Salamat po sa mga tumutulong sa amin. Sana po ay pagpalain niyo sila. At 'wag niyo silang pababayaan.*" Again, there were tears we had to fight.

For the next couple of hours, the children danced for us, sang for us and we played games. They loved having their photos taken. "*Ate, piktyuran mo kami,*" they said, tugging at my hand, my arm or shirt. Then they would crowd around me and say, "*Patingin, patingin!*" and they would gasp collectively at the sight of their faces on my camera's screen.

The kids were so full of energy, it was crazy. It was like the entire room was jumping.

At one point I was asked to give the kids a quick talk, to encourage them to go to school and make the most out of their lives. I did my best, but those were just words. I knew that our presence and the help we wanted to give them was the biggest encouragement we could offer.

Inspiration

Judge Lore's work is an inspiration. He has worked hard his entire life and could have chosen to spend his life in retirement just relaxing. Instead, he has chosen to help those in need. The children obviously adore him, and for good reason.

Soon, it was time for the kids' meal. We helped out during the feeding by distributing plates of rice, mongo and vegetables. It was a challenge because the kids brought their own plates and containers and we had to identify which ones belonged to them. Still, no one complained. Being able to feed the kids felt more like a privilege, not a chore.

50 sacks of biscuits from First Choice Food Corp. ERIK ARAZAS

After eating, the kids became even more energized.

"*Tapos na ba kayo kumain?*" Hazel asked them.

"*Opo!*" they screamed.

"*Masarap ba?*"

"*Opo!*" they screamed again.

The kids were then divided into six groups, were assigned to different *ates* and *kuyas* and together they sang Christmas carols with all their might.

Too soon

The time to say goodbye came too soon.

We were glad that with the help of so many of our friends we were able to raise a little over P50,000 pesos and bring many sacks of rice, bags of groceries and boxes and boxes of food.

But the best part was spending time with the kids.

"This was wonderful," Judge Lore said. And it was. It was a beautiful experience. And it's not over yet.

Until now, donations in check and cash are still coming in. Shopwise has pledged P10,000 worth of groceries for the soup kitchen. E-mails and Friendster messages from people who want to help are still pouring in. We hope that this outpouring never ends.

With the countless number of people still needing help, it shouldn't.

The people behind the Lighthouse Center for Children are inspired by this passage: "After a thousand years, it will not matter what kind of house you live in, what kind of car you drove or how much money you have in your bank account. What matters is what you have done to make a difference in the life of a child."

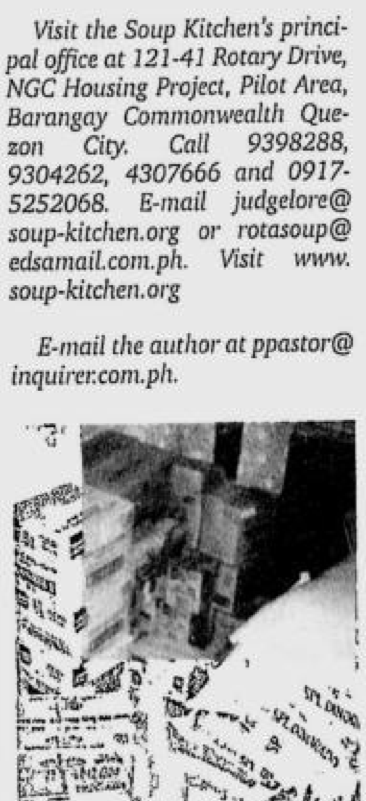
We told the kids, "We're here now because we want to help you. One day, when you're older, it will be your turn to help those who are younger than you."

This story is more than just about providing food for hungry mouths. It's about giving these children hope—and that's the most important thing.

This is our small step in trying to change the world.

Visit the Soup Kitchen's principal office at 121-41 Rotary Drive, NGC Housing Project, Pilot Area, Barangay Commonwealth Quezon City. Call 9398288, 9304262, 4307666 and 0917-5252068. E-mail judgelore@soup-kitchen.org or rotasoup@edsamail.com.ph. Visit www.soup-kitchen.org

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.



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'Narnia' and the fight for our animal friends

By Andrew Butler
Campaign director, Peta Asia-Pacific

CRITICS ARE CALLING "THE CHRONicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" "childlike magic," "gorgeous," and "spectacular."

Rocketing to No. 1 in 14 countries, the film version of C.S. Lewis' beloved literary classic brings to vivid life the talking animals, the dwarfs, the fauns, the centaurs, and the giants who have enchanted countless fans of C.S. Lewis' books over the years.

Beyond the big-budget Hollywood hoopla, Narnia is a reflection of Lewis' belief that a person's identity springs from his or her relationships—with the Earth, animals, people, and God.

The Oxford and Cambridge academic maintained that people who do not have a caring and appreciative attitude toward animals will not likely have a caring and appreciative attitude toward humans. He despised the abuse of animals and condemned the cruelty that was sanctioned by educated men in authority—experimentation on animals, or "vivisection," for instance.

Lewis wrote: "The victory of vivisection marks a great advance in the triumph of ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism over the old world of ethical law; a triumph in which we, as well as animals, are already the victims and of which Dachau and Hiroshima mark the more recent achievements. In justifying cruelty to animals we put ourselves also on the animal level. We choose the jungle and must abide by our choice."

MORE THAN A MOVIE. "The Chronicles of Narnia" reflects man's relationship with the world—and the animals that inhabit it.

In an essay in the recently published book "Revisiting Narnia," Peta president Ingrid E. Newkirk argues that C.S. Lewis would be an animal rights activist if he were alive today.

"After all," Newkirk writes, "he was a vehement antivivisectionist, and his all-time hero was a cat." In Lewis' time, "The idea of preserving habitat or the thought that animals actually have feelings and can enjoy, love, be devoted to and grieve for their fellows had not yet been born. Lewis might well have marveled at how close other animals' DNA is to our own, but no such finding had appeared in scientific periodicals..."

"If he had known what we found decades after his death—that elephants communicate at frequencies inaudible to the human ear, as do mice, that gulls sing lullabies to their chicks in the nest, that squid send messages via dermal patterns of light and color, that prairie dogs utter different sounds to announce the presence of friend, foe or stranger, and volumes of similar research showing that animals talk outside of fairy tales—I believe Lewis would have evolved from a kindly man into a true animal rights activist. I wish, at the very least, I had the opportunity to discuss it with him."

For more information and to find out how you can help protect animals, visit PETA.org or text 0919-5318314.

Andrew Butler is a 10-year veteran campaigner with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), an international animal rights organization that believes animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment. Peta Asia-Pacific is based in Manila.

> If C.S. Lewis were alive today, no doubt he would have been an animal rights activist

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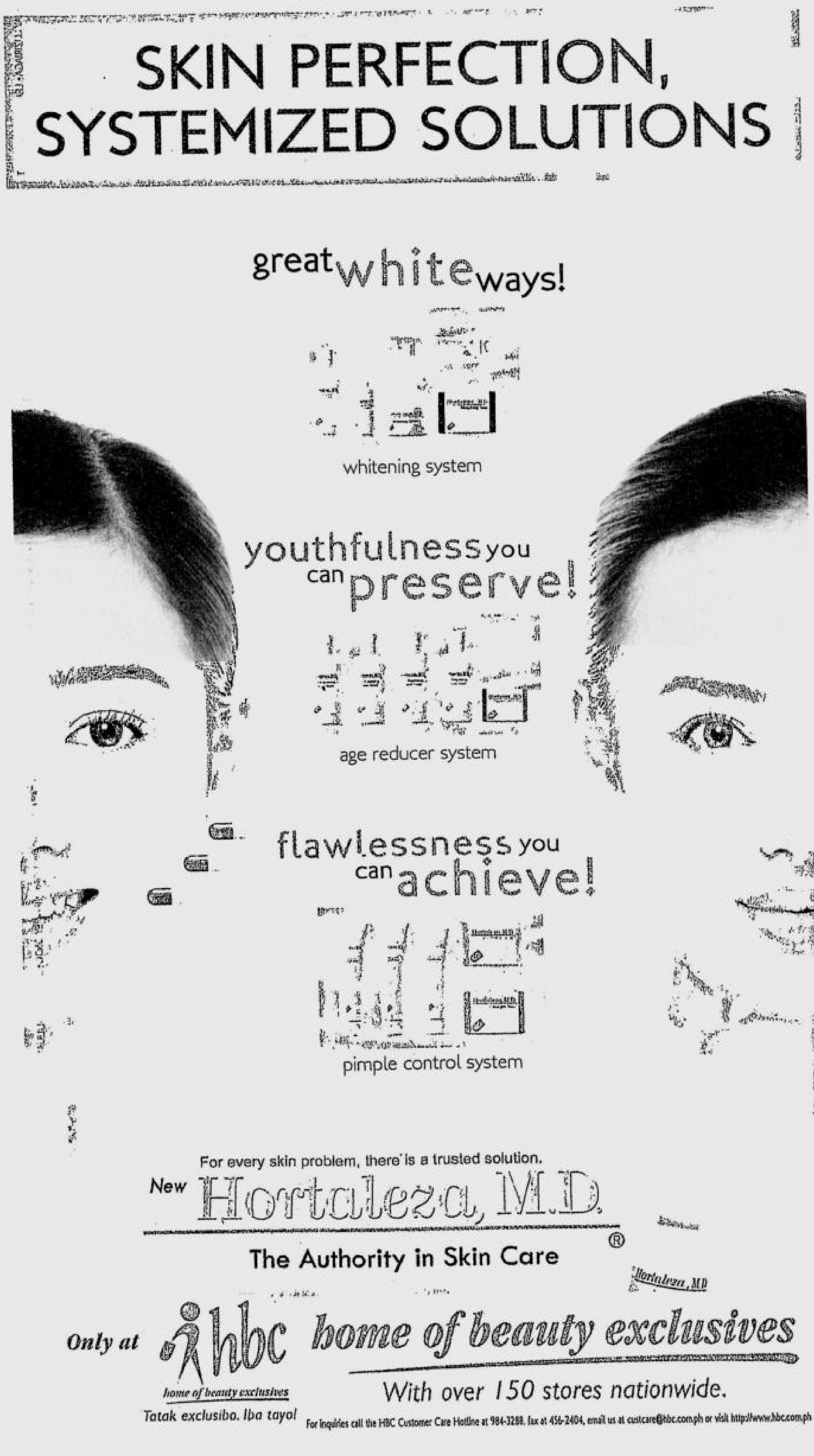
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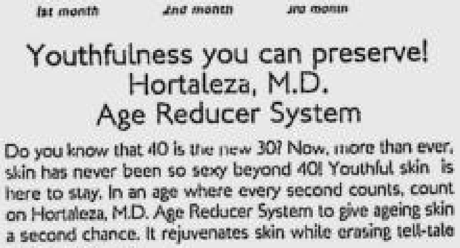
Whitening is not all-in-one. It is a continuous and integrated process that needs ample time to make you fully reap its benefits. That's why serious whitening requires nothing less than a comprehensive skin care system.
Our prescription? Hortaleza, M.D. Whitening System! Gives your skin radiance by day and lightening by night. Used regularly, this system works hard to effectively lighten blemishes and dark spots, while providing protection from the skin-darkening effects of the sun and the environment! So when it comes to skin whitening, go with Hortaleza, M.D. Whitening System!
Get a Whitening starter kit for only P299*!

Whitening you can swallow!
Hortaleza, M.D. Illuminous Whitening Capsule
Achieving porcelain-white, celebrity complexion and making it last is a process that goes beyond the usual skin-deep solutions. Thanks to the discovery of Glutathione, getting more permanent results has finally become so effortless.
Glutathione is essentially a natural, immunity-boosting tripetide amino acid that is found in the body. Regular intake of Glutathione has been tested and proven for its positive "effect": whitening of dark skin! No wonder, it has been dubbed as the "prescription-of-the-moment" by Hollywood dermatologists, thus earning its stature as one of the most coveted "to-die-for" beauty arsenals among celebrities, socialites --and practically anyone who can afford it.
However, with the cutting-edge expertise of Hortaleza, M.D., the once-prohibitively priced Glutathione is now made accessible with new Hortaleza, M.D. Illuminous Whitening Capsule! Enjoy the multi-benefits of Glutathione whitening and anti-ageing, plus Vitamins C and E with Alpha Lipoic Acid. All in one capsule for only P39.75 each! That's 53% more affordable than other brands! Get it in packs of 30's and 10's at all HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives Stores nationwide. Now isn't that illuminating news for your skin?

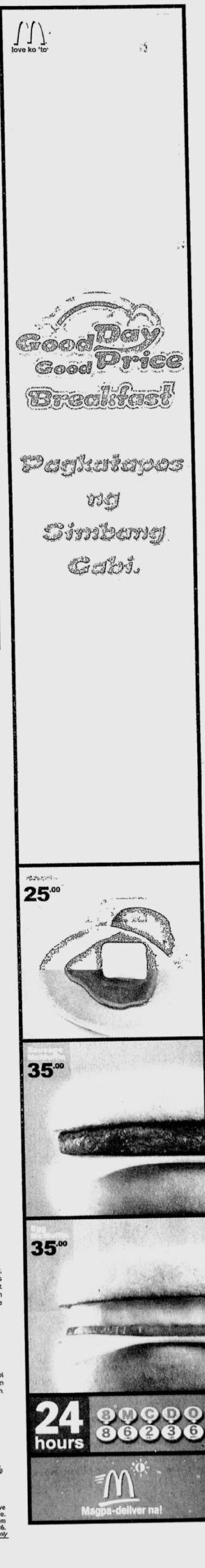


Youthfulness you can preserve!
Hortaleza, M.D.
Age Reducer System
Do you know that 40 is the new 30? Now, more than ever, skin has never been so sexy beyond 40! Youthful skin is here to stay. In an age where every second counts, count on Hortaleza, M.D. Age Reducer System to give ageing skin a second chance. It rejuvenates skin while erasing tell-tale lines completely!
Get an Age Reducer starter kit for only P275*!

Flawlessness you can achieve!
Hortaleza, M.D.
Pimple Control System
Acne or zits? Turn to the Hortaleza, M.D. Pimple Control System amazingly cleanses, purges, heals and purifies skin to the last pore! Bid acne-inducing oils goodbye! Let smooth flawless skin rule!
Get a Pimple Control starter kit for only P285*!
* Prices subject to change without prior notice

New Hortaleza, M.D.®
The Authority in Skin Care

*FREE FACIAL!
Text FREE FACIAL to 09189215520 to avail of an exclusive free facial service at selected HBC branches nationwide. Present your cell phone with confirmation message from HBC Customer Care. Offer is good until January 31, 2006.
*1st 100 customers only



Rocking society through volunteerism

No more excuses, Philippines!

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Jake Verzosa

I will never settle for a few
when most are within reach.
I have no interest in 'okay.'

I will never confuse a fad
for commitment.
I will frustrate the cynics.

I have been stubborn when necessary.
I have been easy when offered collaboration.

I have lit fires.

I am a Rock Ed volunteer.
—"Lit: A Rock Ed Volunteer Manifesto"
by Gang Badoy

GANG Badoy bringing hope to a Badjao village, July 2005

IF THERE IS ONE THING THAT would define my past year, it wouldn't be my internship at a news wire or my pathetic attempt to travel around Asia during sem break.

Being part of a movement that is dead set on changing things defined 2005 for me.

Back in high school, I was the kid who refused to spend lunch breaks attending meetings of social action groups and who came up with an excuse letter for the annual Christmas outreach program. The only thing I did that was close to volunteerism was signing up online for Make Trade Fair, and that was because Coldplay frontman Chris Martin said so.

ROCK STARS OF VOLUNTEERISM: Gang Badoy, CP David, Meah Ang See, Ani Almario and Jaime Garchitorena

My reticence with volunteerism changed one night when I agreed to accompany some friends to a "party" at the Old Swiss Inn Makati.

What I expected to be another night of free food or "chika-chika-beso-beso" turned out to be something that would change my outlook in life. That night happened to be the first gathering of Rock Ed volunteers. I was dumbfounded with Gang Badoy's speech about the "poverty of hope here in the Philippines."

It struck me hard, since I was part of that young set that yearned to pack our bags after college in search of a better life in other shores. That night I was hungry than ever—hungry for answers and hungry for change.

Rock Ed Philippines is the brainchild of Badoy and four equally determined friends—Jaime Garchitorena, CP David, Ani Almario and Meah Ang See. As their website (rockedphilippines.org.) explains, all five, plus their growing list of volunteers (including Noel Cabangon, Radioactive Sago Project, SEA Games superstar Miguel Molina and photographer Jake Verzosa), firmly believe that poverty should end now, and the best way would be through education.

Here are some ways you can help Rock Ed rock society now.

1. **Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer!** Anybody can do this. If you're a student, photographer or a dog-lover, please visit www.rockedphilippines.org or call 0906-2717287 for more information. You can even volunteer as a band or a group.

If you want to join another NGO such as Haribon or Bantay Bata, Rock Ed will still be happy about that since it's still active volunteerism.

2. **Voice out on the Net.** Post these links in your blogs, websites or even friendster bulletins to fire up awareness about any of the eight Millenium Development Goals.

- http://rockedphilippines.org/
- http://whiteband.org/
- http://www.millenniumcampaign.org/

3. **If you are already part of an organization, adopt the "No More Excuses" theme.** Or better, apply the "No More Excuses" mantra in your everyday life.

4. **Show your support anytime, anywhere.** Wear your white-band symbol to call for the end of poverty. For "No More Excuses" t-shirts, contact Francis at 0917-8578664.

Also, check out awesome band Kala's RockEdition CD. It includes five songs and two videos (including one by Lav Diaz) and costs P160. Proceeds go to Rock Ed Philippines. E-mail kalafied@yahoogroups.com for more information.

5. **Never ever succumb to the poverty of hope.**

Here are other suggestions taken from the website.

For those who have graduated, talk to your alma mater's president or principal and make them aware of Rock Ed's availability to provide substitute classes on antipoverty.

Get us in touch with your org head, student affairs dean or student council president so we can plan events leading up to the three key dates for the global antipoverty campaign. Plan your own white-band event! Coordinate with Rock Ed for content or materials.

Organize a poverty awareness photo exhibit. We can send you José Enrique Soriano's photo exhibit called "Episodes," dealing with the themes closest to our hearts.

In digital, web, print, broadcast, media and radio, feature us in your articles, invite anyone from our roster to contribute an article, write about our events, interview our volunteers.

Give antipoverty awareness articles and features free media mileage, space in your publication or a few seconds on-air. In short, lend your voice to the campaign.

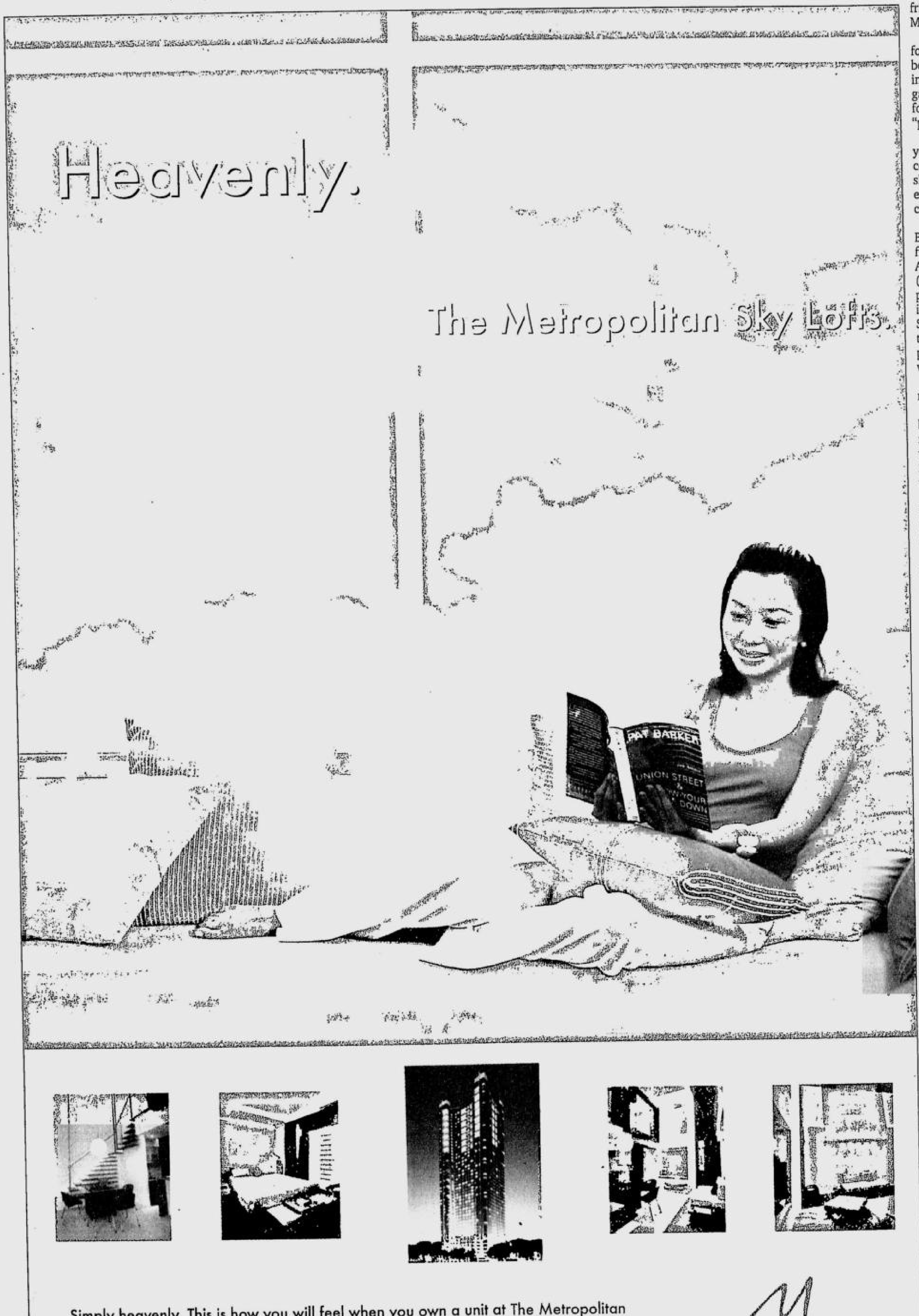
If you are a professional, get us in touch with your company's marketing arm so your company can sponsor awareness banners for public schools and white bands to give out for free.

You can sponsor several "Rock Ed Series" visits to public schools.

Those in the print business may help us with tarp, paper, banners, streamers. E-mail us so we can send you a design you can print yourself and hang in your neighborhood. Or you can give us the finished tarp and we can send it to a school who can't afford one. We want a "No More Excuses, Philippines!" banner in every single campus in this archipelago.

Help us make it possible, one banner at a time.

E-mail tammydavid@gmail.com



Simply heavenly. This is how you will feel when you own a unit at The Metropolitan Sky Lofts. Whatever you're into, nothing compares with the distinction of life made unique here. The Sky Lofts units showcase Makati's vast skyline through its panoramic 20-foot glass windows. The Metropolitan Sky Lofts also comes with a membership in the redeveloped Metropolitan Athletic Club (MAC).

The Metropolitan Skylofts – your next haven of relaxation amidst the skies.

View The Metropolitan Sky Lofts model unit today! Call 818-1977, 818-1266, 890-5711 to 14 or 0917-8536539.

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inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Open hands, big hearts

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

JAY Chiu plays dress-me-up with a child.

WHILE MANY PEOPLE CHOOSE TO PARTY their Christmas holidays away, there are those who also find time spending the season with lessfortunate people.

Hands On Manila, along with HSBC, decided to recognize these people who selflessly spend their hours helping out others. Ten extraordinary volunteers from various organizations were chosen by HSBC in the recent Faces of Volunteerism contest.

While many of these volunteers are admittedly more mature and experienced, a couple of volunteers stood out for their deeds despite their young ages.

Read on about them and the other winners of the contest, and you just might be inspired by their courageous stories.

Madeleine de Guzman, 25

Jesus Loves the Little Children Foundation Inc.

Madeleine, or Mads as she is usually called, is a volunteer for Jesus Loves the Little Children

OPEN/ E3

The winners of HSBC's Faces of Volunteerism are all modern-day Filipino heroes

Share a Christmas Tradition with your loved ones.

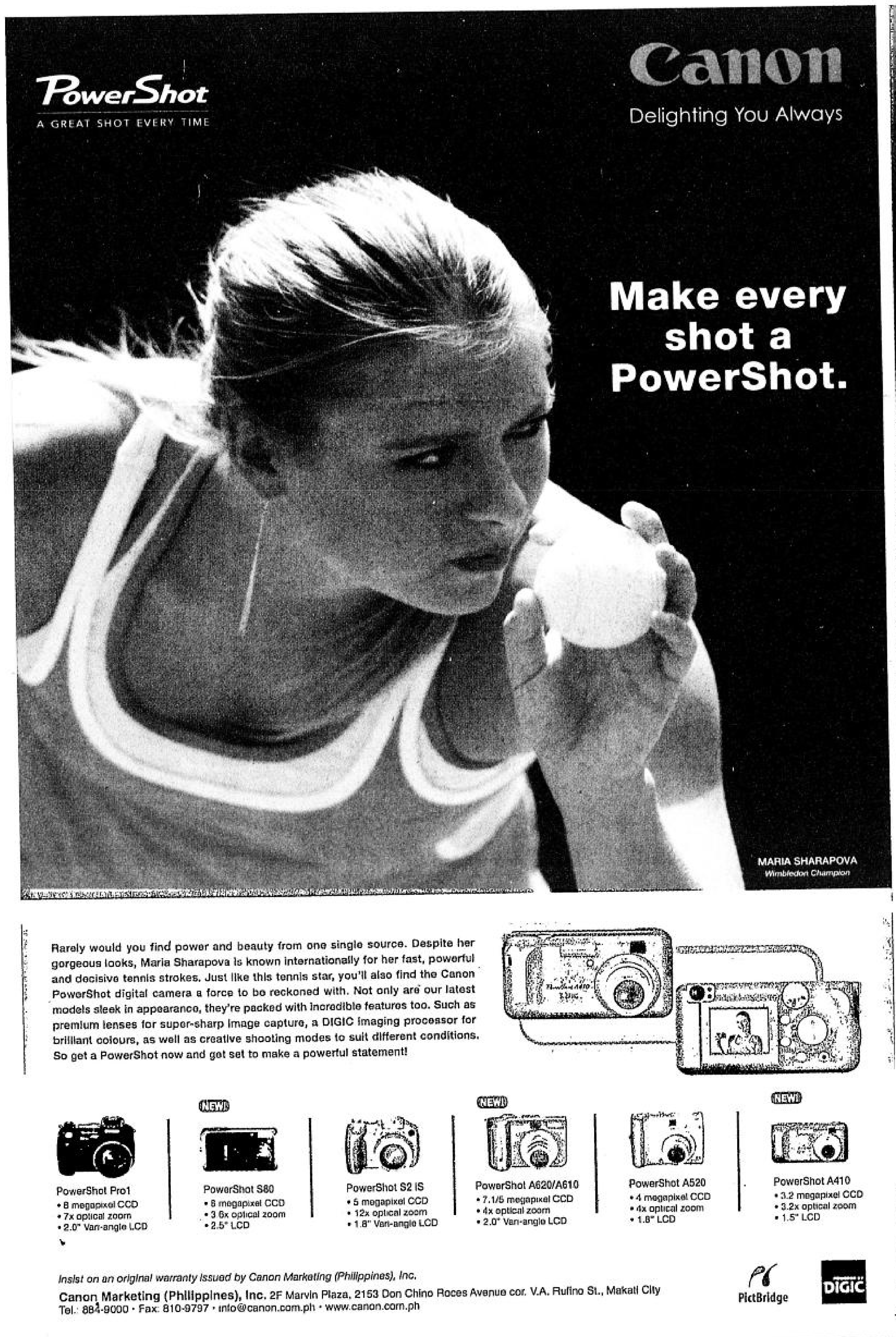
☆ Simbang Gabi ☆

at SM MEGAMALL ORTIGAS

7:30 pm, December 15 to 23 • SM Megamall - Megatrade Hall 1

Celebrating Priests:

Dec. 15 - Thurs. - Rev. Msgr. Esteban U. Lo, LRMS
Dec. 16 - Fri. - Rev. Fr. Mario S. Sobrejuanite, SSP
Dec. 17 - Sat. - Rev. Fr. Nolan A. Que
Dec. 18 - Sun. - Rev. Msgr. Roberto C. Canlas
Dec. 19 - Mon. - Most Rev. Jesse E. Mercado, D.D.
Dec. 20 - Tues. - Rev. Fr. Joel O. Jason
Dec. 21 - Wed. - Rev. Fr. Dave T. Concepcion
Dec. 22 - Thurs. - Most Rev. Luis Antonio G. Tagle, D.D.
Dec. 23 - Fri. - Rev. Fr. Genaro O. Diwa



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A GREAT SHOT EVERY TIME
Canon
Delighting You Always
Make every shot a PowerShot.
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Wimbledon Champion
NEW!
NEW!
NEW!
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Rarely would you find power and beauty from one single source. Despite her gorgeous looks, Maria Sharapova is known internationally for her fast, powerful and decisive tennis strokes. Just like this tennis star, you'll also find the Canon PowerShot digital camera a force to be reckoned with. Not only are our latest models sleek in appearance, they're packed with incredible features too. Such as premium lenses for super-sharp image capture, a DIGIC imaging processor for brilliant colours, as well as creative shooting modes to suit different conditions. So get a PowerShot now and get set to make a powerful statement!

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- 4 megapixel CCD
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- 1.8" LCD

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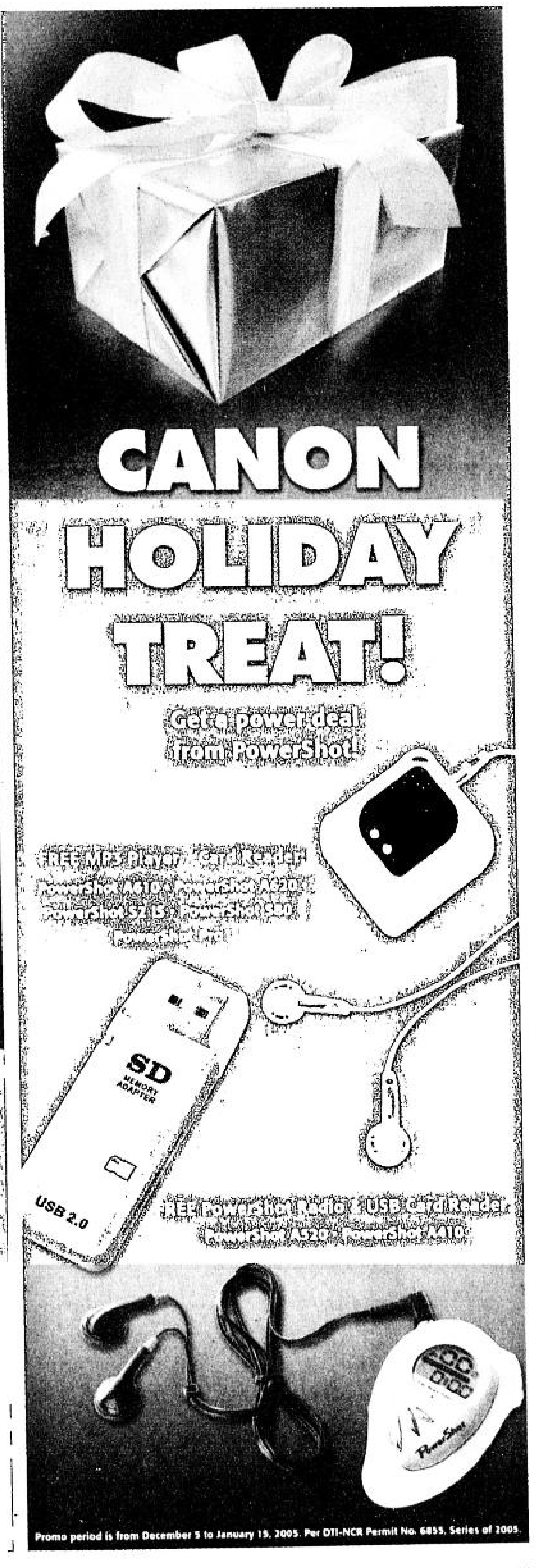
Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc. 2F Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
Tel.: 884-9000 • Fax: 810-9797 • info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph



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Get a power deal from PowerShot!
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PowerShot A610 • PowerShot A620
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SD MEMORY ADAPTER
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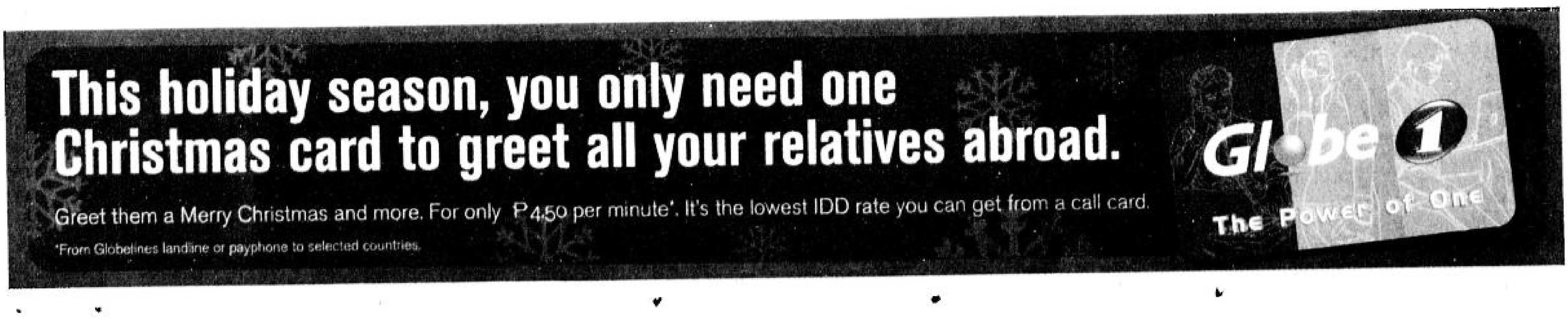
Promo period is from December 5 to January 15, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 6855, Series of 2005.



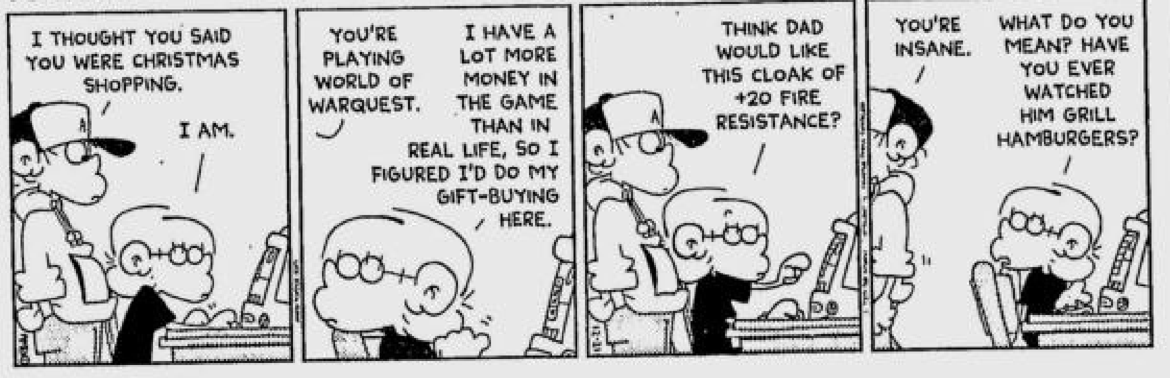
Globe 1
The Power of One

This holiday season, you only need one Christmas card to greet all your relatives abroad.

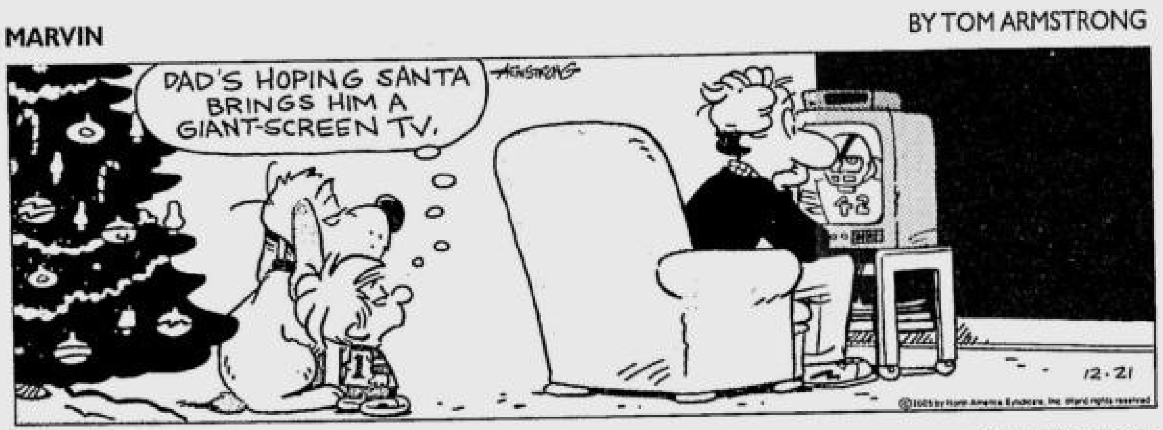
Greet them a Merry Christmas and more. For only P4.50 per minute*. It's the lowest IDD rate you can get from a call card.

*From Globelines landline or payphone to selected countries.

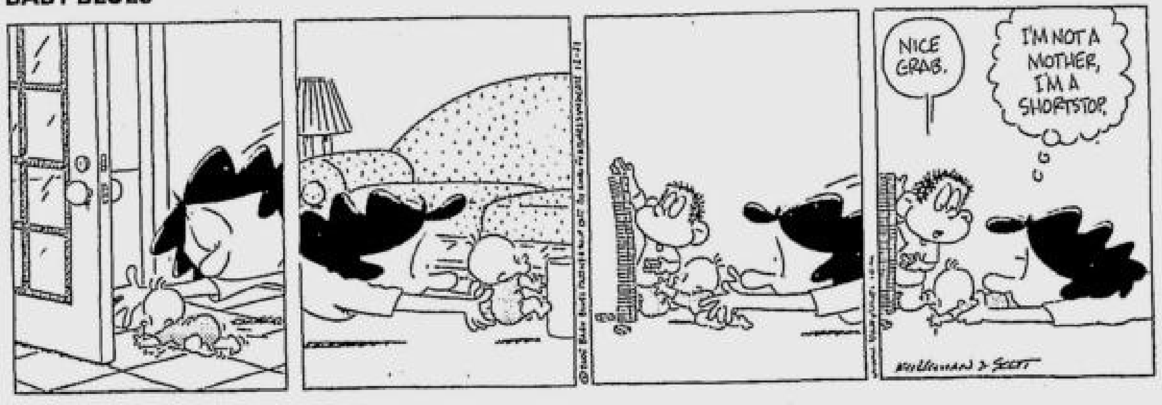
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.
I AM.
YOU'RE PLAYING WORLD OF WARQUEST.
I HAVE A LOT MORE MONEY IN THE GAME THAN IN REAL LIFE, SO I FIGURED I'D DO MY GIFT-BUYING HERE.
THINK DAD WOULD LIKE THIS CLOAK OF +20 FIRE RESISTANCE?
YOU'RE INSANE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED HIM GRILL HAMBURGERS?

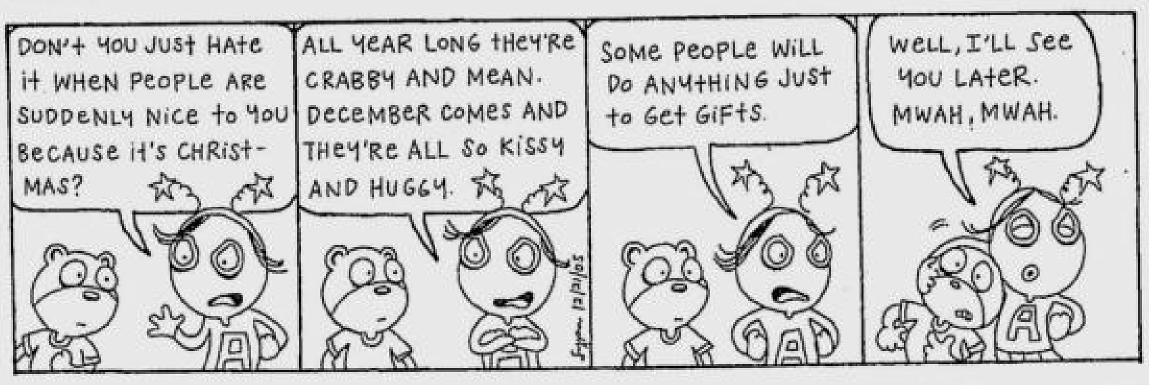
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


DAD'S HOPING SANTA BRINGS HIM A GIANT-SCREEN TV.
ARMSTRONG
12-21

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


NICE GRAB.
I'M NOT A MOTHER, I'M A SHORTSTOP.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DON'T YOU JUST HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUDDENLY NICE TO YOU BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTMAS?
ALL YEAR LONG THEY'RE CRABBY AND MEAN. DECEMBER COMES AND THEY'RE ALL SO KISSY AND HUGGY.
SOME PEOPLE WILL DO ANYTHING JUST TO GET GIFTS.
WELL, I'LL SEE YOU LATER. MWAH, MWAH.
12/21/05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a powerful communicator—with your body, your words and your silences. You know how to present something dramatically. People immediately sense what you want. You love children and animals. You are very much in command in your relationships. The year ahead holds major changes for you—perhaps as major as those in 1997.

Birthdate of: Samuel L. Jackson, actor; Ray Romano, actor; Frank Zappa, songwriter/singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be aware of how you dress in the next few weeks, because others definitely notice you now. Perhaps this is because you've been asked to accept extra responsibilities?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're hungry for travel. Your sense of adventure is aroused. You want to grab more of life. You want to learn something fresh and exciting!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is the right time to settle conflicts about shared property and the joint ownership of anything. In the next few weeks, you might have an opportunity to do this.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today the Sun moves opposite your sign, where it will stay for four weeks. This means your relationships with others become more important.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): In the month ahead, you'll be able to get a lot done! Your desire to get better organized is the main reason. After all, where there's a will, there's a way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're entering a wonderful, fun-filled, delightful time. In the next four to six weeks, love affairs, romance, activities with children, the arts and show business will delight you. Ditto for professional sports.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's time now to swing your focus to domestic and family matters. Talk to parents. How can you make your home feel welcoming to everyone?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Busy you! The tempo of your days is starting to accelerate. You've got places to go, things to do, people to see! Stay on your toes. Pick up the pace!

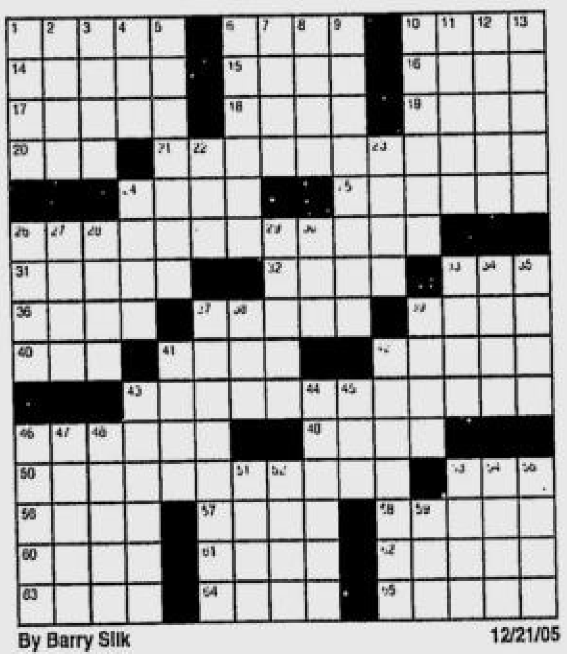
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're thinking about money. Some of you are contemplating an important purchase. Either way, your cash flow will be a primary concern to you in the next few weeks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today the Sun moves into your sign, where it will stay for the next four weeks. This means it's your turn to howl! It's time to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): What you need is rest and recreation. You need to work behind the scenes. Try to grab some solitude in the next few weeks. You need to pamper yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your popularity rating will definitely rise in the next few weeks. Everyone wants to see your face! Accept all invitations. Enjoy schmoozing with others.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA
12/21/05

ACROSS

1 Campus commons
6 Tip off
10 Comic Wilson
14 Not rented
15 Miscellany
16 Bonanza vein
17 Perplexed
18 May honorees
19 Urban roads: abbr.
20 Gunk
21 Delmonico, e.g.
24 Southern side dish
25 In an unemotional manner
26 Branch of mathematics
31 Radio studio sign
32 Frank girl
33 Exercise pace
36 Gossip
37 Chasm
39 Singing star
40 Porker's pad
41 Window part
42 "The Addams Family" name
43 Publication started in 1923
46 Take for granted
49 Still-life subject
50 Trick pitch
53 Tease
56 Fox chaser
57 Flag down
58 Ekberg or Loos
60 Grimm figure
61 Bicolor bite
62 Lawn-care need
63 Marsh plant
64 Threadbare
65 Word preceding 21A, 26A, 43A and 50A

DOWN

1 Bog
2 Biblical preposition
3 "The Sun __ Rises"
4 Singer Kiki
5 Less decorated
6 Australian marsupial
7 Skin cream ingredient
8 Frosted
9 Rocket top
10 Without qualification
11 Adored
12 Role model
13 Bothersome
22 Sale-tag abbr.
23 Vexed
24 Last words?
26 Silent assents
27 Measuring standard
28 Astor or Martin
29 Seraglio
30 ESL part
33 Guitarist Hendrix
34 Kitchen kiln
35 Fixed look
37 "Concentration" or "Jeopardy"
38 Undivided
39 Nod off
41 Arizona county
42 Old-time street illuminator
43 Sporting plumage
44 King Arthur's paradise
45 Guy's date
46 Player
47 Power glitch
48 Squirrel away
51 Poi source
52 Coffin stand
53 New Zealand bird
54 News piece
55 Challenge
59 Postal creed conjunction

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

G	M	E	N	■	L	I	E	S	■	S	T	E	E	L
N	O	T	E	■	O	N	T	O	■	W	A	L	L	A
A	L	A	I	■	S	T	U	N	■	I	B	S	E	N
W	E	L	L	B	E	R	I	G	H	T	B	A	C	K
■	■	■	■	O	R	O	■	■	I	C	Y	■	■	■
C	L	E	A	R	S	■	B	A	T	H	■	P	E	T
R	E	T	A	G	■	S	O	S	A	■	E	E	L	Y
O	N	T	H	E	R	I	G	H	T	T	R	A	C	K
P	D	A	S	■	A	G	U	E	■	O	L	L	I	E
S	S	S	■	I	N	N	S	■	S	P	E	E	D	S
■	■	■	E	N	O	■	■	A	M	I	■	■	■	■
T	O	U	G	H	N	U	T	T	O	C	R	A	C	K
B	U	L	G	E	■	G	E	A	R	■	O	M	E	N
A	S	N	E	R	■	H	A	R	E	■	B	O	D	E
R	E	A	D	E	■	S	K	I	S	■	S	K	E	E

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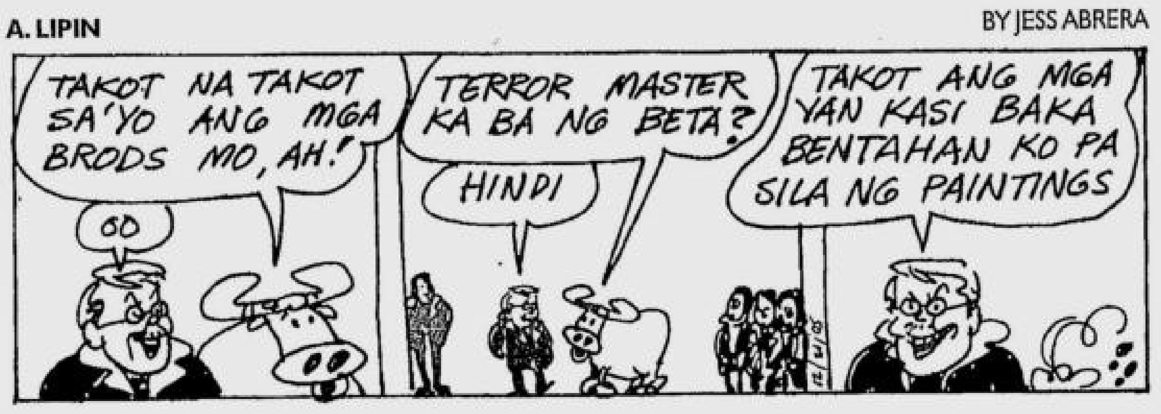
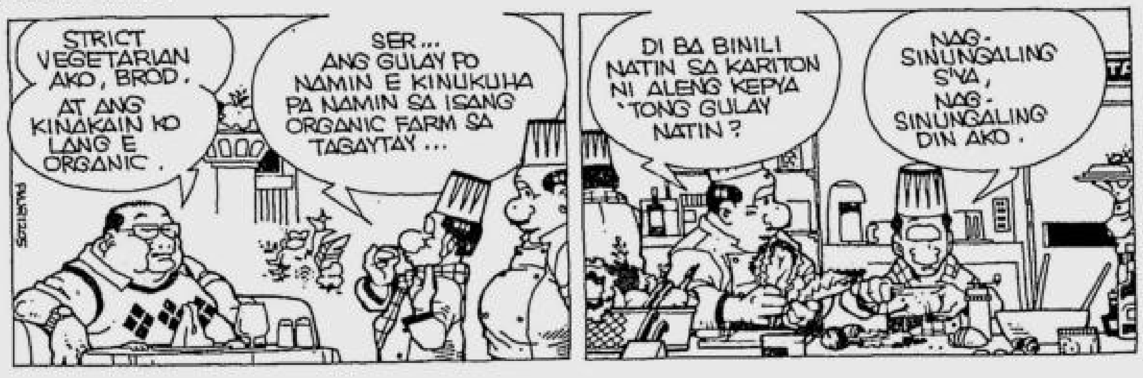
12/21/05

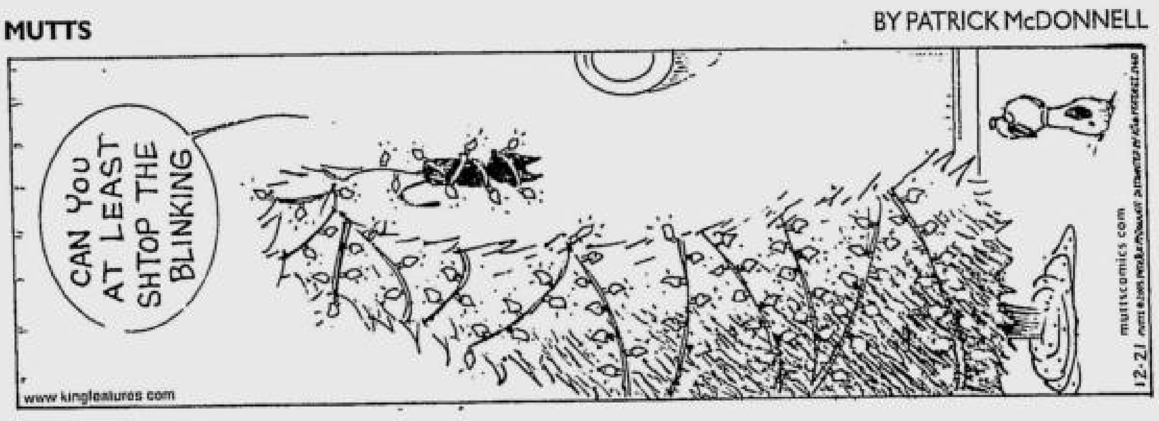
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


TAKOT NA TAKOT SA'YO ANG MGA BRODS MO, AH!
OO
TERROR MASTER KA BA NG BETA?
HINDI
TAKOT ANG MGA YAN KASI BAKA BENTAHAN KO PA SILA NG PAINTINGS

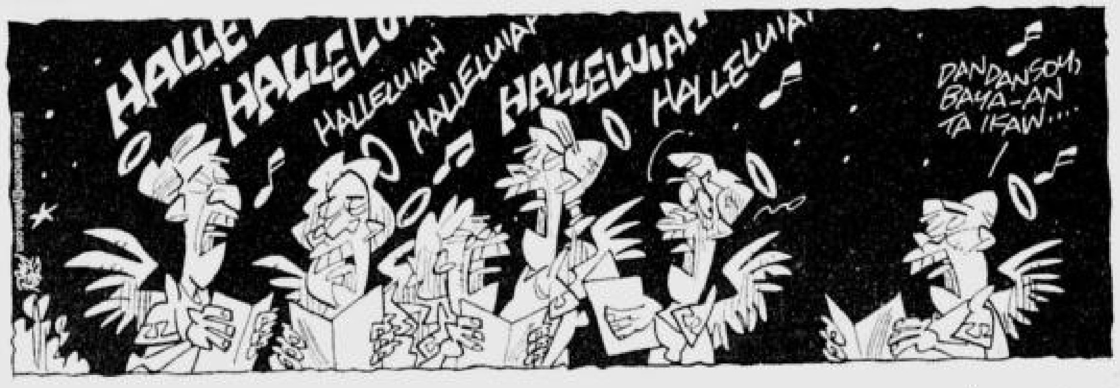
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


STRICT VEGETARIAN AKO, BROD. AT ANG KINAKAIN KO LANG E ORGANIC.
SER... ANG GULAY PO NAMIN E KINUKUHA PA NAMIN SA ISANG ORGANIC FARM SA TAGAYTAY...
DI BA BINILI NATIN SA KARITON NI ALENG KEPYA 'TONG GULAY NATIN?
NAG-SINUNGALING SIYA, NAG-SINUNGALING DIN AKO.

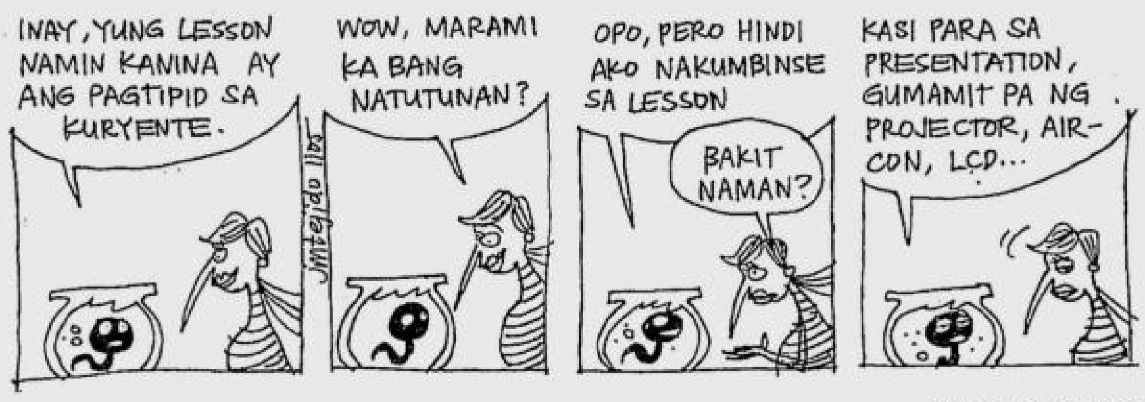
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


CAN YOU AT LEAST SHTOP THE BLINKING
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
12-21

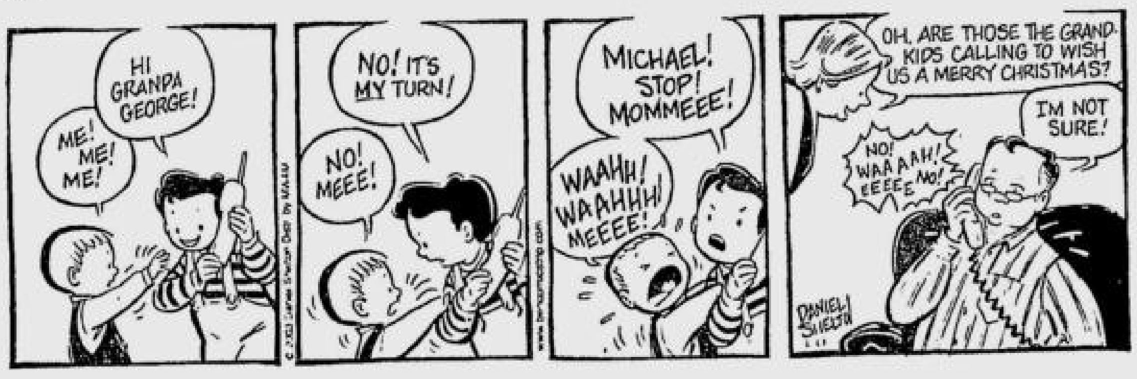
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HALLE
HALLELU
HALLELUIAH
HALLELUIAH
HALLELUIAH
HALLELUIAH
DANDANSOY, BAYA-AN TA IKAW...

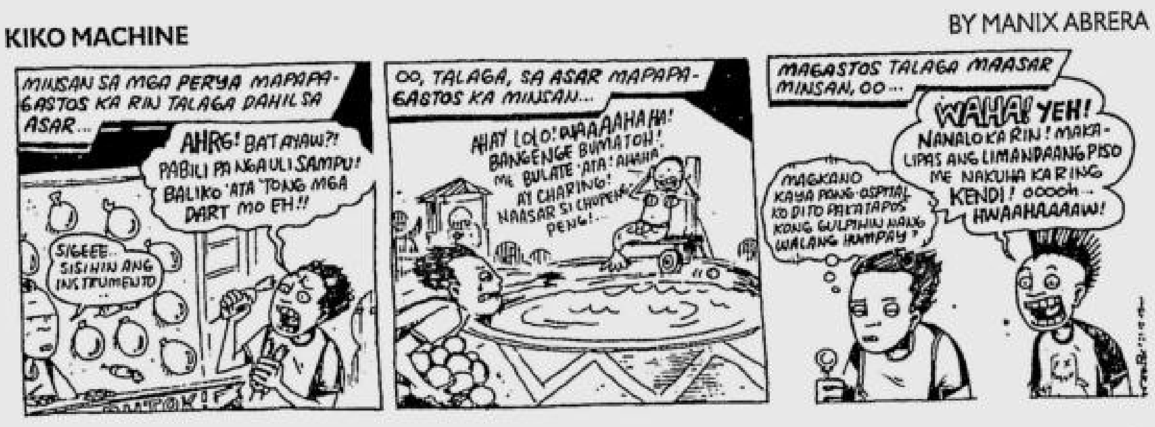
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, YUNG LESSON NAMIN KANINA AY ANG PAGTIPID SA KURYENTE.
WOW, MARAMI KA BANG NATUTUNAN?
OPO, PERO HINDI AKO NAKUMBINSE SA LESSON
BAKIT NAMAN?
KASI PARA SA PRESENTATION, GUMAMIT PA NG PROJECTOR, AIR-CON, LCD...

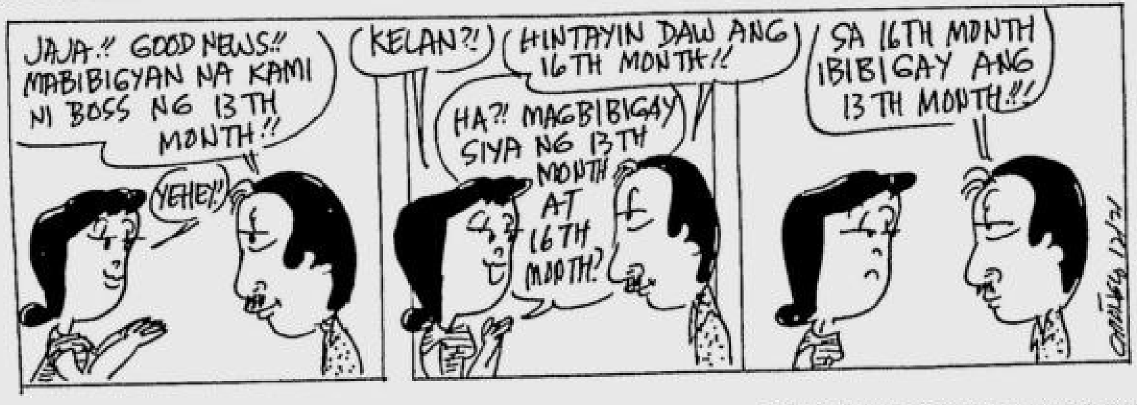
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


HI GRANPA GEORGE!
ME! ME! ME!
NO! IT'S MY TURN!
NO! MEEE!
MICHAEL! STOP! MOMMEEE!
WAAHH! WAAHHH! MEEEE!
OH, ARE THOSE THE GRAND-KIDS CALLING TO WISH US A MERRY CHRISTMAS?
I'M NOT SURE!
NO! WAAAAH! EEEEE NO!
DANIEL SHELTON

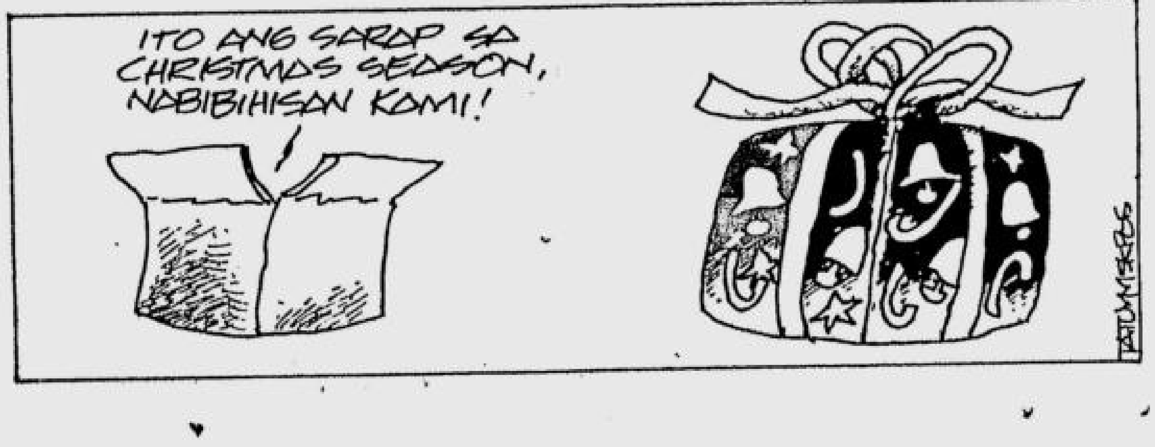
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


MINSAN SA MGA PERYA MAPAPA-GASTOS KA RIN TALAGA DAHIL SA ASAR...
AHRG! BAT AYAW?! PABILI PA NGA ULI SAMPU! BALIKO 'ATA 'TONG MGA DART MO EH!!
SIGEEE.. SISIHIN ANG INSTRUMENTO
OO, TALAGA, SA ASAR MAPAPA-GASTOS KA MINSAN...
AHAY LOLO! WAAAAHAHA! BANGENGE BUMATOH! ME BULATE 'ATA! AHAHA AT CHARING! NAASAR SI CHOPENG PENG!..
MAGASTOS TALAGA MAASAR MINSAN, OO...
MAGKANO KAYA PONG OSPITAL KO DITO PAG TAPOS KONG GULPIHIN NANG WALANG HUMPAY?
WAHA! YEH! NANALO KA RIN! MAKA-LIPAS ANG LIMANDAANG PISO ME NAKUHA KA RING KENDI! ooooh... HWAAHAAAAW!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA!! GOOD NEWS!! MABIBIGYAN NA KAMI NI BOSS NG 13TH MONTH!!
YEHEY!
KELAN?!
HINTAYIN DAW ANG 16TH MONTH!!
HA?! MAGBIBIGAY SIYA NG 13TH MONTH AT 16TH MONTH?
SA 16TH MONTH IBIBIGAY ANG 13TH MONTH!!
CHIONGLO 12/21

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ITO ANG SARAP SA CHRISTMAS SEASON, NABIBIHISAN KAMI!
TATUM '05

Open hands, big hearts

From page E1

Foundation Inc. (JLLCFI), a home in Pasig for abandoned, abused and former street kids. She met the kids in 2002 during a friend's outreach activity, and has never looked back since.

"In JLLCFI, the kids not only get shelter but also food and education," explains Mads. "Most of them are boys aged 5-16. They are taught the Christian way of life and are encouraged to showcase their talents. We prepare arts and crafts activities for the kids, like making bookmarks, masks, cards and kites. On Saturdays, we sometimes go on field trips to Enchanted Kingdom or Parks and Wildlife, play badminton, watch plays and the like. I also try to get donations for the foundation for individual kids or for specific activities."

How to help others? Mads shares the following suggestions:

1. Visit a foundation with your friends, like Jesus Loves the Little Children Foundation, and spend a few hours with them.

2. Ask your *barkada* to go to your house and have your own party, and invite kids from a foundation to sing carols and just have your friends pool money to be given to the carolers.

3. Make loot bags for kids with your family and bring them to the nearest foundation to be given away.

4. Collect old clothes and toys and bring them to an orphanage. Some friends of mine just donated to the Foundation instead of giving their friends gifts this Christmas.

5. Don't pressure yourself into giving something monetary. Most of the kids and elders actually appreciate just the time spent with them.

Jesus Loves the Little Children Foundation Inc. is located at 19-A Esguerra St. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City (6403405, 6439666). Contact Mads at madzdeguzman@yahoo.com

Jay Chiu, 21

Unicef Volunteers and UST-Unicef Volunteers

At 21, Jay has proven that age is not a factor in being able to make a difference in the world. His brainchild, Project Home, rehabilitates selected learning centers around Metro Manila that cater to impoverished children, by repainting walls and cleaning up their premises.

Asked how he got his start in volunteerism, Jay says, "I have been volunteering for Unicef since 2004. It all started when I was chosen to be a part of their Volunteer Internship Program. We were tasked to create fundraising projects and to manage the whole event. Fortunately, all the projects we handled were successful. We were able to raise about P300,000 in a short span of time.

"As a spin-off from the program, I was lucky enough to found a Unicef-based organization called the UST-Unicef Volunteers. This is an organization that enabled students in our school to have direct interaction with Unicef activities in the Philippines and conduct their own socio-civic activities. We are helping other schools as well to organize socio-civic activities.

"The best thing about my work is, I love kids! That's why I am really lucky to have been introduced to Unicef because of its long-term program in seeing the development of children in the Philippines and around the world. It's like planting a seed now to change the future!"

Contact the Unicef hotline at 7581000, look for Sheena or Tintin; or the UST-Unicef Volunteers: Jay at 0919-2557365 and Nino at 0922-4714326.

Alistair Troy Lacsamana

Project head, Aklatang Pambata

Aklatang Pambata aims to bring books back to children through storytelling and workshops. If you love books and would want to volunteer for the organization, visit aklatangpambata.blogspot.com, e-mail Troy at troybdude@yahoo.com or contact him at 0917-8290925.

Vivian Gabaldon

She was cited for "her commitment in using her God-given talents and skills to respond to the dental needs of those in indigent communities."

Chito and Marge de la Vega

This husband-and-wife team was cited by HSBC for committing to serve as a volunteer family for street children through the Breakfast Club project of Hands On Manila every Saturday in the CCP grounds or in Guadalupe Park. Contact Marge de la Vega at 0917-9803541.

Cecilia G. Arates

HOM Volunteer Contact for Scoring Points at the Pangarap Foundation

Cecil heads a basketball clinic every Saturday and trains the boys together with other volunteers.

Leo Cabasag and Khristina Umali

Leo and Tina are the bosom buddies of Talking Hands, a program for the hearing-impaired youth of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish in Pasig City.

George J. Enrique

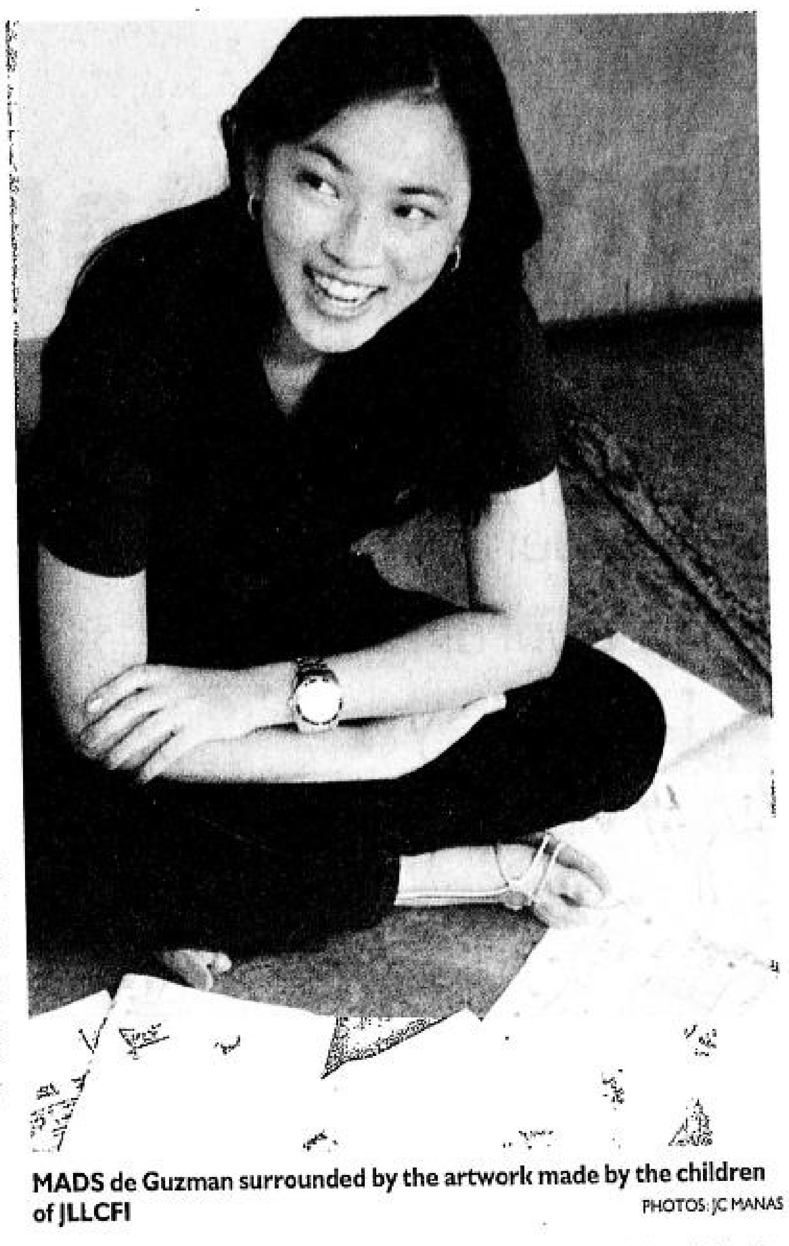
George started as a HOM office volunteer for six months. Even after getting a full-time job at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, he continued to actively assist in several projects including Better Days, Scoring Points, Merienda Mates. He even led the Pangarap Shelter boys at the Mirant Coastal Cleanup project in Pagbilao, Quezon.

Robert R. Lao

Robert started as a volunteer with Circle of Friends Foundation, helping in their marketing and database development. He was eventually elected on the COFFI Board of Directors. He organized a fundraising art event that raised P250,000 for the foundation. Robert also allows HOM volunteers to use his bar/restaurant in Quezon City as a venue for Merienda Mates, a feeding program for ChildhopeAsia street children.

Socorro T. Diesta, Ma. Gerlyn P. Petilos, Jenette P. Camalig, Marie Yvonne L. Bundang and Donabel L. Villanueva

Soc, Gerp, Jen, Yvonne and Dona are active volunteers at the Tahanan Sta. Luisa Breakfast Club. They also participate in many other HOM volunteer projects, including the Hands Youth Against Aids event with the Gift Foundation, tree-planting and coastal cleanup projects with Accenture, Childhope Asia Merienda Mates, and many others. They also support other service projects as donors, particularly the Scoring Points and Dream Paddles projects. They even managed to nominate HOM in the annual Thomson Community Champion Awards, a worldwide search to recognize the best employee-led volunteer service.



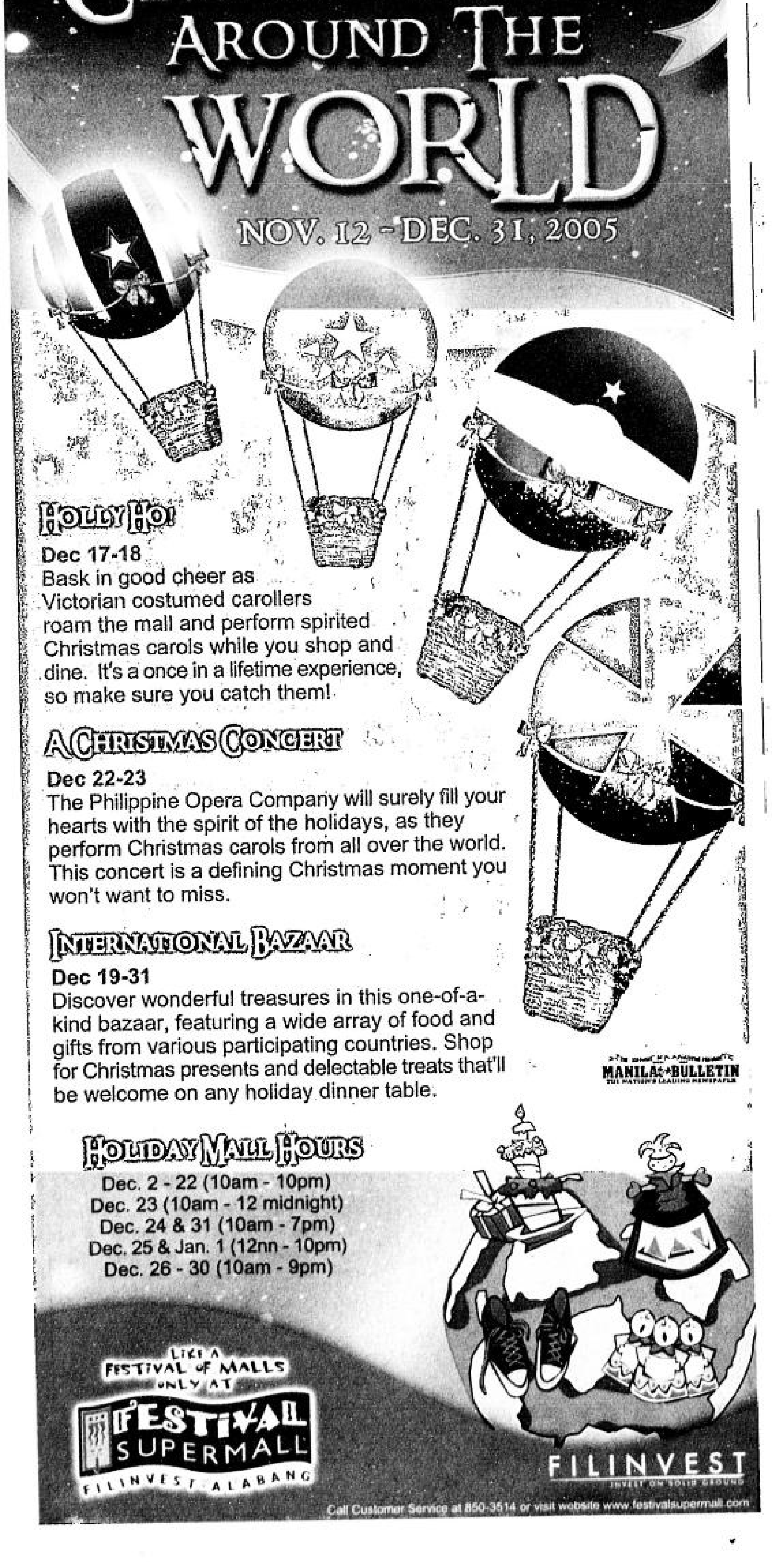
MADS de Guzman surrounded by the artwork made by the children of JLLCFI

PHOTOS: JC MANAS

Gilbert Co Chan

Gilbert conceptualized and developed the Dream Paddles Project as a source of livelihood for the boys of Pangarap Shelter. The boys were taught to make rowing paddles to be used by various Dragonboat Rowing Teams during competitions.

Gilbert also organized the paddle-painting activity where volunteers helped the boys paint their dreams on the paddles. Some of the Pangarap boys now practice with the San Beda Dragonboat Rowing team.



CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD
NOV. 12 - DEC. 31, 2005

HOLLY HO!
Dec 17-18
Bask in good cheer as Victorian costumed carollers roam the mall and perform spirited Christmas carols while you shop and dine. It's a once in a lifetime experience, so make sure you catch them!

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Dec 22-23
The Philippine Opera Company will surely fill your hearts with the spirit of the holidays, as they perform Christmas carols from all over the world. This concert is a defining Christmas moment you won't want to miss.

INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR
Dec 19-31
Discover wonderful treasures in this one-of-a-kind bazaar, featuring a wide array of food and gifts from various participating countries. Shop for Christmas presents and delectable treats that'll be welcome on any holiday dinner table.

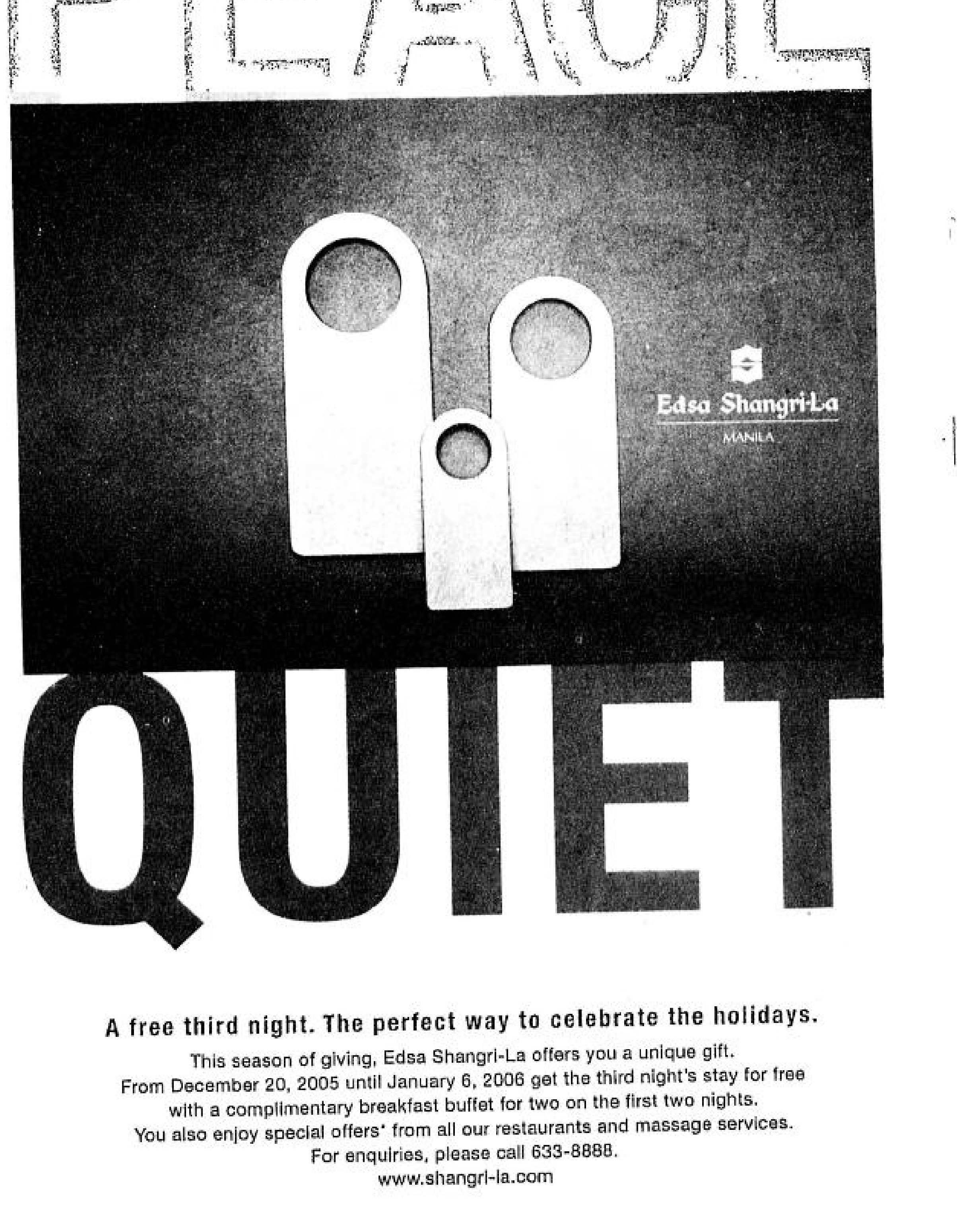
MANILA BULLETIN

HOLIDAY MALL HOURS
Dec. 2 - 22 (10am - 10pm)
Dec. 23 (10am - 12 midnight)
Dec. 24 & 31 (10am - 7pm)
Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 (12nn - 10pm)
Dec. 26 - 30 (10am - 9pm)

LIKE A FESTIVAL OF MALLS ONLY AT
FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
FILINVEST ALABANG

FILINVEST

Call Customer Service at 850-3514 or visit website www.festivalsupermall.com



PEACE
QUIET

Edsa Shangri-La
MANILA

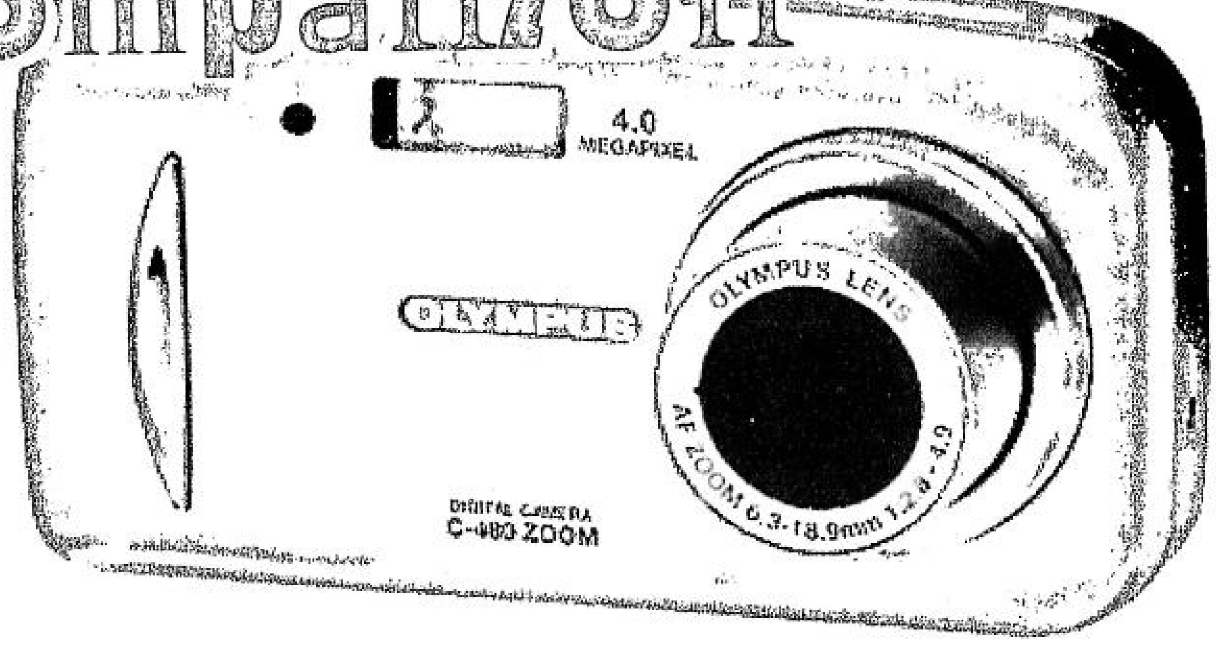
A free third night. The perfect way to celebrate the holidays.

This season of giving, Edsa Shangri-La offers you a unique gift.
From December 20, 2005 until January 6, 2006 get the third night's stay for free
with a complimentary breakfast buffet for two on the first two nights.
You also enjoy special offers* from all our restaurants and massage services.
For enquiries, please call 633-8888.
www.shangri-la.com

*Plus 10% service charge and 10.7% Government Tax. Subject to availability and prior confirmed reservations. Open to local residents and expatriates residing in the Philippines only. Proof of residency will be required upon check in. Guests who avail of this promo can get 10% discount at all F&B outlets and 20% discount on massage services. Package valid from December 20, 2005 until January 6, 2006. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-1060, Series of 2005.

OLYMPUS C-480 ZOOM

Perfect party companion



Using this camera is an experience both rewarding and extremely addicting

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bU! Contributor

WRITING ABOUT THE OLYMPUS C-480 Zoom digital camera, I realize I am grateful that I am allowed to play with gadgets, the cost of which is equivalent to a hundred submitted articles like this. Even better, I am able to use these devices at those moments when I most need them.

In the case of the Olympus C-480 Zoom, I am able to go to parties, gatherings and similar activities with confidence, armed with the guarantee that I can take a top-notch visual record of the event and enjoy it for many years.

Easy to use

The Olympus C-480 Zoom is a 4.0 megapixel digital camera with 3x zoom capability, a 1.8" LCD screen and 14mb internal memory. It has expandability in the form of an xD-picture card slot, and power in the form of two standard or rechargeable AA sized batteries.

The cam is placed between the "easy to use" and "affordable" sections of the Olympus line of Camedia products, and distinguishes itself via its 3x zoom feature. Its siblings have 2.8x zoom as the norm.

Olympus' user-friendliness can be seen in the thoughtful details. It displays the shooting mode on the LCD screen while you rotate the knob and make your choice. There are Portrait, Self Portrait, Night Scene, Night and Portrait, Landscape, Sport, Beach, Snow, and seven other modes, all shown on the screen quite clearly with a sample shot to help you choose quickly.

I have to say this is my most favorite feature, because it's lacking in other higher models I've tried. That lack can leave you guessing via difficult-to-guess icons that disappear in the low light.

This, plus the camera's ability to shift from shooting to display mode and back with the just one push of a button, shows it was designed for a beginner but frequent shooter in mind.

But even professional photographers would love to have the C-480 in tow for quick shots sans complicated equipment. The macro and super macro mode allows for shots of as little as 2cm away.

Using this camera is an experience both rewarding and extremely addicting, and I've stuffed my computer with pictures of food, vegetables, little toys and even colorful paper clips and thumbtacks in extreme close-ups.

Thoughtful design

And while any decent camera should be able to handle your average Christmas party, the Olympus C-480 has been nothing short of phenomenal. At approximately 160g and 106x56x36mm, it's about the size, weight and even appearance of your average digital camera, but its smooth rounded shape actually helps you pull it out of your pockets and ready to shoot in around 3-5 seconds.

Thoughtfully designed bulges help you grip it even with one hand, without worrying that your thumb will get in the picture or cover the flash, or it'll slip and fall into the fruit salad bowl.

Shoot away at your friends, click to display mode button to check results, click back to shooting mode, shout "peeekchurr!" and fire, all in eight seconds.

For all these and more, the Olympus C-480 is the one gadget lent to me that I most want to have for myself.

We have a winner!

ALVIN UMALI OF NORTH Daanghari, Taguig, will be going home with Panasonic EB-VS3, thanks to his hilarious movie. It really cracked us up. Say goodbye to your jurassic phone, Alvin. You're going home with a new baby. Please call Ching de la Cruz at 8978808 for details on how to claim your prize.

You, too, can be a winner!

This week, 2bU! and Digital Exchange are giving away an Olympus C-480. If you want to join our contest, tell us why you deserve to win this phone in the most creative way you can. E-mail your entries to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget your name, school/office and contact info!

Enjoy the magic of
Hong Kong Disneyland with Visa.

HONG KONG
DISNEYLAND

Visa Hong Kong Disneyland Getaway

Have a magical vacation in Hong Kong Disneyland the Visa way -- get a chance to win a round trip for a family of 4 to Hong Kong Disneyland. Plus enjoy breakfast with your favorite Disney characters, and receive 2 FASTPASS tickets per guest (8 for a family of 4) for line reservations in selected rides and shows.

Be mesmerized and dazzled with the 4 magical worlds of Hong Kong Disneyland. Experience what it was like in the turn of the 20th Century in **Main Street, USA**. Be intrigued at the mysterious jungle of **Adventureland**. Meet Mickey and all his friends in **Fantasyland** and blast into outer space at futuristic **Tomorrowland**! Timeless tales and bold adventures are brought magically to life for children of all ages.

Mechanics:

1. Promo Period: 27 November 2005 to 24 January 2006
2. Minimum of P500 single-receipt Visa purchase will allow Visa cardholder to register his/her Visa transaction for a chance to win one (1) of seven (7) Family of Four packages to Hong Kong Disneyland on March 2-4, 2006. PLUS HK$5,000 pocket money*

How to join?

Register your Visa transactions at any of the following available channels

1.

SMS: Text Visa for details P2.50 per text will be charged.	Globe - 2361 Smart - 325 Visa <name as it appears on card,address,issuing bank,last 4 digit,amount of transaction,date of transaction,time of transaction> and send to the corresponding access number of your mobile network. (Note that there are no spaces after each comma. Please do not use commas for amounts more than P999.99, and when entering the address.) Ex. Visa MENNIE SO,24/F 6750 AYALA AVENUE MAKATI CITY,AIG,1234,1000.25,112705,1808

2. Call Center: Metro Manila - 637 2768, Provincial - Toll Free # 1800-1888-2591

3. Website: www.hblmasia.com/visa

Disney VISA

*Per family of four
See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3082 Series of 2005

Change the world in 100 ways

2bU! lists a number of ways you can make a difference this season. These 100 different ideas will arm you with enough ammo to give love on Christmas Day and all the other days of the year

By the 2bU! Staff

1. ENJOY DESSERT AT THE DIAMOND Hotel and help Pathways to Higher Education send poor students to college. The project, called Cravings for a Cause, promises to give 25 percent of your dessert bill to the Pathways fund. Now that's sweet. There are a lot of sugary treats to choose from: Mango Cream Cake, Mint Chocolate Cake, Carrot 'n' Cashew Nut Cake, Lemon Crumble Cheesecake, Super Moist Cake, etc. You can also purchase the Diamond Hotel's special Pathways Cake. And we thought cakes were sinful. Call 4266001 loc. 4049 and look for Mia.

2. Hands On Manila's Giving Guide is the perfect gift for your friends and even yourself. The Giving Guide highlights different organizations, their beneficiaries and what people can do to help them. The guide comes in a pretty gift box which also includes gift tags and beautiful cards that represent the different concerns of Hands On Manila—food and nutrition, animal welfare, environment, livelihood, and women. Visit www.handsonmla.org, call 8435231 and 8437044 or e-mail homla@info.com.ph.

3. Log on to www.myayala.com for a list of charitable organizations you can donate to

CHANGE/ F2

WATCH the "Light A Million Mornings" and help these kids.

PONG IGNACIO

OPEN HOUSE DAILY

CANYON RANCH

A home above it all.

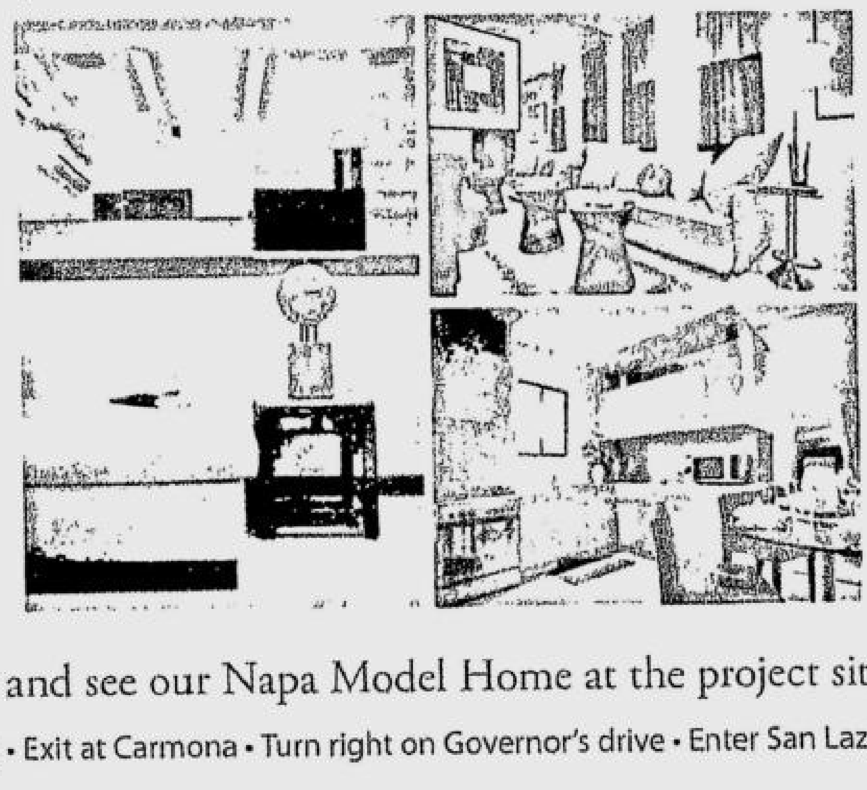
This holiday season, start owning a house for as low as P300*/day.

This year, it's wise to put your hard earned holiday money
to fulfill a lifetime dream and secured investment.

At Canyon Ranch in Carmona, Cavite, we have made it easy for you to start owning your home this Christmas.
With unit prices starting at only P1.8 Million, you can have a gift of a lifetime.

Introducing CANYON RANCH'S...

Napa Home Collection



Come and see our Napa Model Home at the project site today.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Take South Expressway • Exit at Carmona • Turn right on Governor's drive • Enter San Lazaro Leisure Park • Follow signs to Canyon Ranch.

**Subject to low downpayment and certain payment terms .*

FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED.

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www.canyonranch.com.ph

Change the world in 100 ways

From page F1

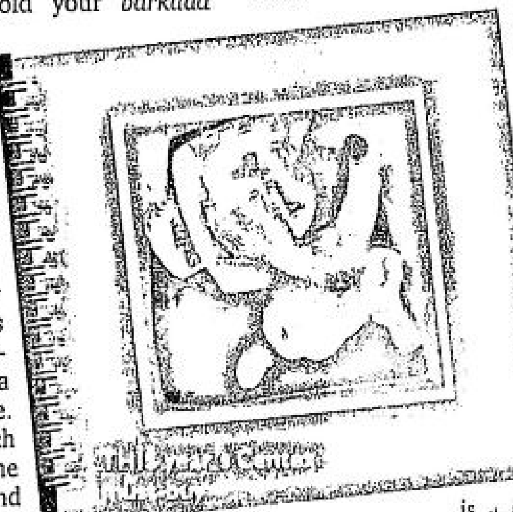
online. You need not be a millionaire to help—you can give as low as P1,500.

4. Instead of habitually shooing away sidewalk beggars, buy *pan de sal*, spread some cheese on them and hand them out at busy intersections.

5. Help Sapat Market of Kaalagad by sharing your excesses—clothes, toys, bags, pillows, blankets, chairs, tables, cabinets, plates—all these goods, whether old or new, will be appreciated. They will be given to people living in depressed communities. Visit Rm. 232 St. Anthony's Building, Aurora Blvd., Cubao, QC, or call Claire or Liway at 4381322.

6. Gather your closest friends at a local orphanage and hold your *barkada* Christmas party with the kids. Instead of giving each other the perpetual candles and bath lotions, use the money to buy toys and food for the orphans.

7. Drop off your old toys and books at any Jollibee outlet for its "Maaga ang Pasko" drive. Help them reach their target of one million toys and books.



8. Spend an entire day just hanging out with a friend going through some family problems, or a grandmother who has been recently widowed.

9. If you're not in too much of a hurry, let a fellow shopper go ahead of you in line at the cashier or at the ATM.

10. Help A.L.A.Y. Foundation Inc. subsidize the education of financially handicapped young people in high school and college or help street children return to school. There is no fixed amount—any help is welcome. Call Ray and Myrna Ortega at 9101895 or 6356056.

11. Play a part in the construction of a new home for seminarians and a pastoral center for public school youth by purchasing beautiful Christmas cards that feature two original artworks by Bro. Gerard Maria, grand prize winner in the college seminary category of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Philippine Postal Corporation's 2005 International Eucharistic Year-National Commemorative Stamps Design Contest. The cards are sold by the Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross, a religious congregation composed of priests and brothers who pursue priestly studies while providing spiritual aid to public school youths and prisoners in the national, regional and local penitentiaries. Call 0921-8150518, 9420533, e-mail mmhc@pacific.net.ph or visit the MMHC House of Formation at 23 Lope K. Santos St., Marikina Heights, Marikina City.

12. Make a quick stop at "Make a Child Happy this Christmas" booths in SM Supermalls; give an old toy, a new toy or make a donation until Jan. 2. Your donations will give an extra dose of cheer to underprivileged children in government hospitals, children's hospitals, DSWD-accredited centers and institutions and indigent children in provinces. Spearheaded by SM Foundation, this is a joint project with Toy Kingdom, Ronald McDonald's, Charity House and the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

13. True Value Home Center is collecting shoes to give to kids who need them. Drop by their branches at Alabang Town Center, Park Square, Rockwell Power-Plant Mall and Shangri-La Plaza Mall and donate a pair or two (or 10).

14. Help preserve what's left of the ozone layer by having your car's air-conditioner serviced to avoid CFC leaks, by choosing energy-efficient refrigerator models and by checking aerosol cans for CFC content.

15. If you find yourself in Baguio, drop by the Good Shepherd Convent and stock up on the treats they offer. Their *ube* and strawberry jams are old favorites. Their new products—sesame crunch, strawberry juice and gelato and baked siopao—are must-tries, too. With each purchase, you are helping send the youth of Cordillera to college.

16. Plant a tree.

TULOY Foundation provides education and housing for street children. PONG IGNACIO

17. Make sure your car isn't polluting the air.

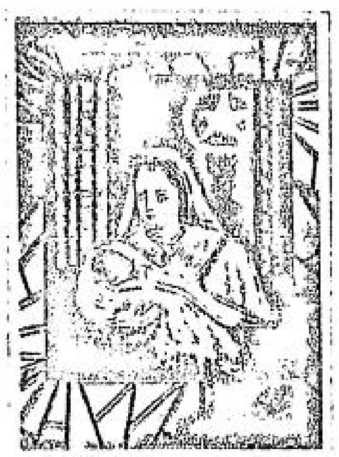
18. Donate blood and wear a Band-Aid as a badge of honor. Some 500,000 people die because of blood loss every day. You can help bring down this number. Call the Philippine National Red Cross at 5278384 or 97 for directions to the blood center nearest you.

19. Treat your household helpers to a night at the cinemas. Spring for popcorn and sodas, too.

20. Give a gift that your environment-loving friend will appreciate by donating to the Maximo T. Kalaw Institute for Sustainable Development. The funds will be used for an environmental service project to replace the ROTC program in some universities. For a minimum donation of P300, they will prepare a potted herb as a token of your gift to the environment. Call 6317989 or 6317084. Look for Robot.

21. Puso ng Carmelo, which is run by Carmelite nuns, is collecting food and medicines to be distributed to 1,000 sick and indigent people in La Union on the 27th. You can donate by calling Sis. Janelle at 0917-9516413.

22. Life in jail can be especially hard for children. Help keep our children out of jail by supporting the Juvenile Justice Network-Philippines' campaign to pass the Juvenile Justice bill. You can send postcards, write letters, e-mails or faxes to your congressmen, attend sessions at the Lower House when congressmen are scheduled to discuss the bill and donate to the network's programs. Visit www.unicef.org/philippines or contact the Juvenile Justice Network-Philippines at 8480701, 9010176 or 9010134 and e-mail jjnetphil@consuelo.org.



HELP construct a new home for seminarians by buying this card.

23. The Women's Crisis Center works very hard at fighting violence against women. Help them make Christmas happy for the women and children at their shelter by donating Christmas presents for children up to 14 years old (no violence-promoting toys though), basic groceries, art materials, games, towels, powdered milk and underwear. Call the Women's Crisis Center at 9249315 or wccmanila@pacific.net.ph.

24. Help fire victims rebuild their lives by donating clothes and other daily necessities.

25. You've felt the joy of starting a new school year with fresh books and notebooks. Share this pleasure with other kids. Donate school materials which the people behind Help Kids Learn Project will distribute in different areas. E-mail helpkidslearnproject@yahoo.com.

26. Offer hope to children with cancer by helping buy medicines for them. Donations can be made through the Cancer Warriors Foundation, a group that was established as a fulfillment of a promise made by James, a 19-year-old boy who also battled brain cancer. He promised that every Filipino child will have an equal chance to conquer cancer by having access to cancer treatments. This group works hard at helping Filipino kids who are stricken with the illness. Call James Auste at 5514588, e-mail jauste@pacific.net.ph or visit www.c-warriors.org.

27. Sign up for a donor card and let your wish to give life to others be known.

28. Buy limited-edition Beyond Borders Unicef shirts from Hobbes. The shirts, which are numbered, are sold for P850 and P950. Purchasing them is a double-blessing—20 percent of the proceeds go to Unicef and you can remind everyone around you about the rights of children because you'll have them emblazoned on your chest or on your back.

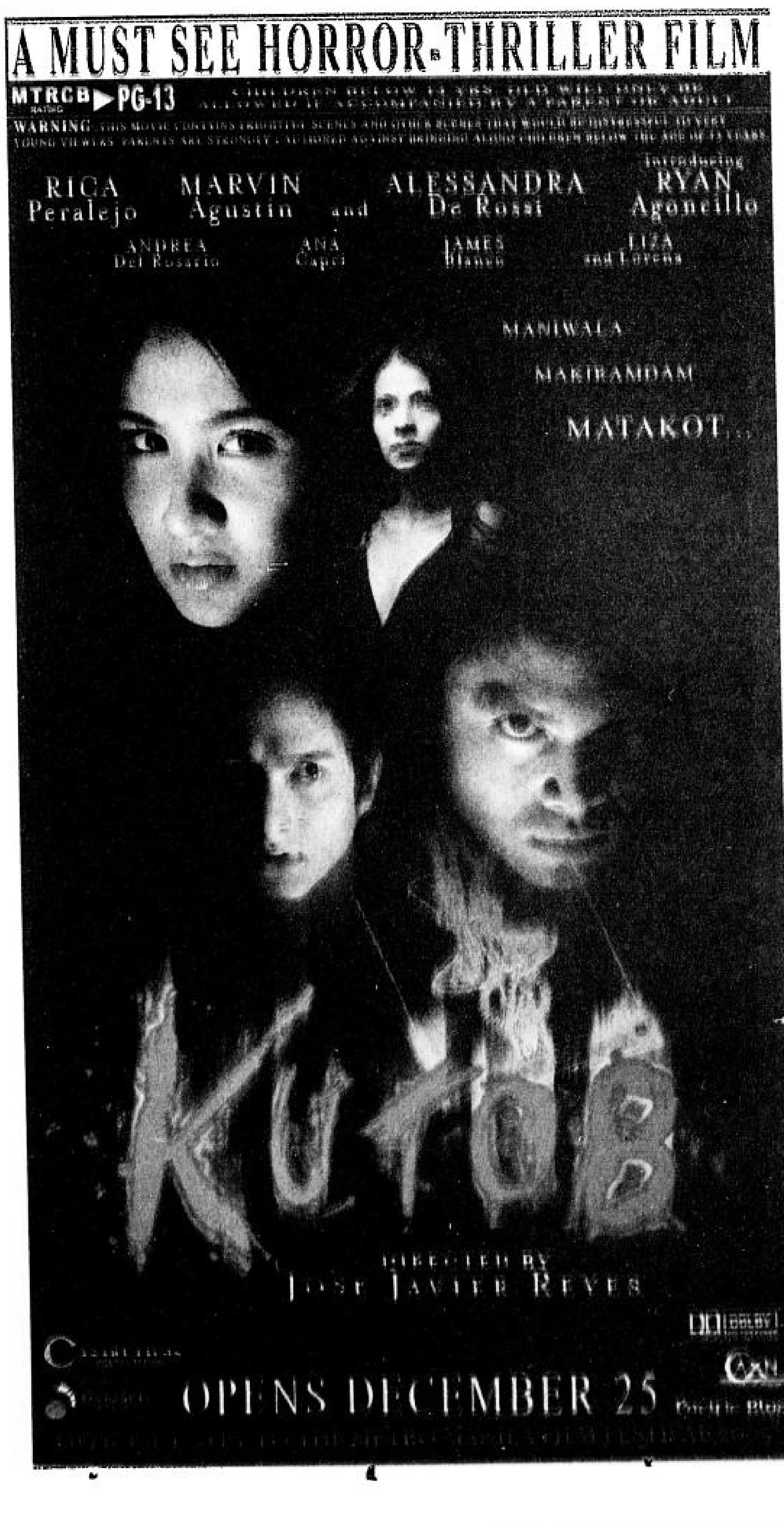
29. Buy all the *sampaguita* garlands so the *sampaguita* girl or boy can go home.

30. Give small items to the "manongs" and "manangs" in your school/office. Instead of just passing them by this morning, take a moment to greet them and express your appreciation for their back-breaking work.

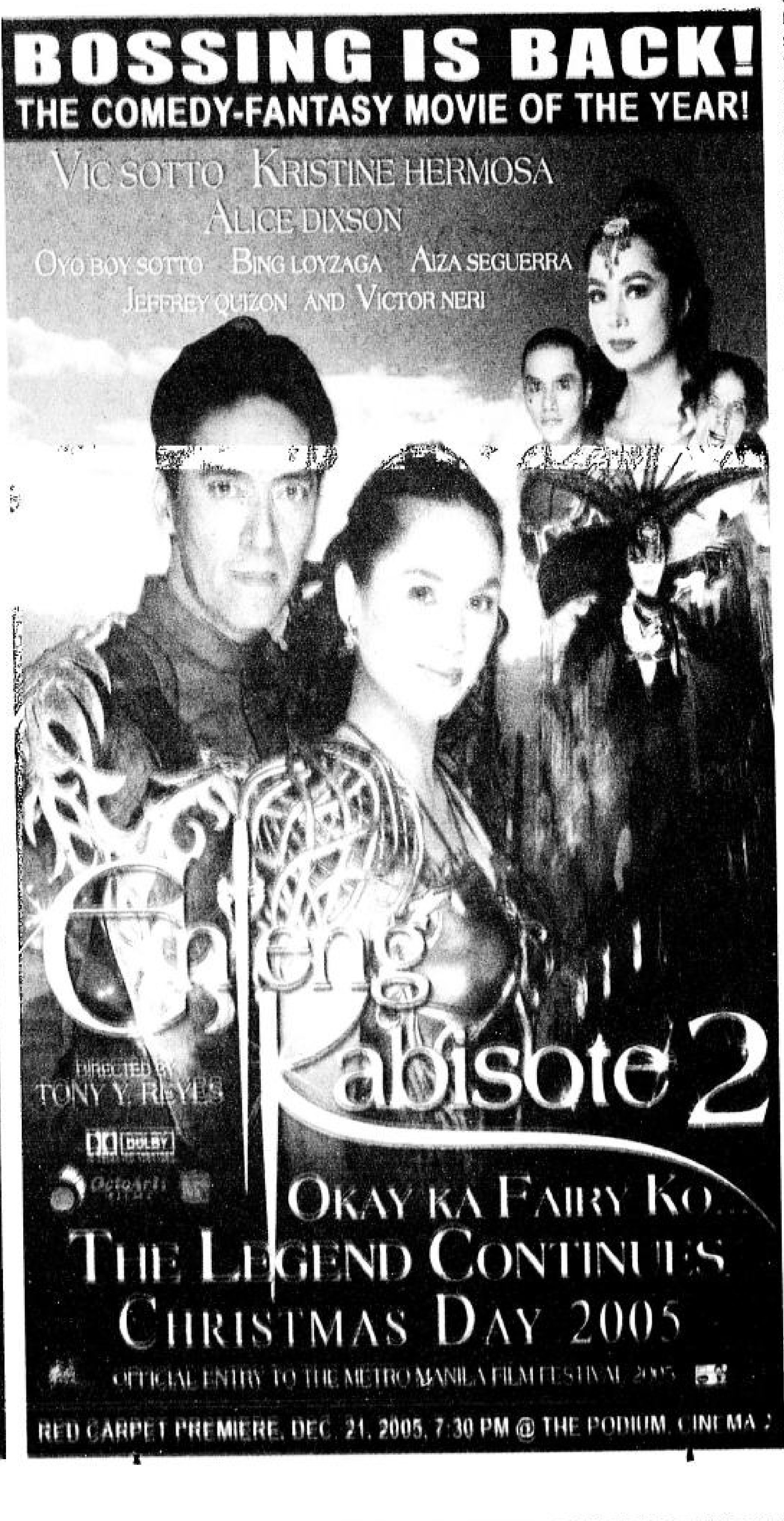
31. The Ayala Foundation's Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education has released different merchandise that feature National Artist Ang Kiukok's "Mother and Child." You can help raise funds for Centex by buying replicas of the painting in a high-grade porcelain plate, mouse pads, gift tags, notecards, memo pads, calendars and our favorite notebooks. You can buy them at the Ayala Foundation (10th Floor Ayala Wing, BPI Building 6768 Ayala Ave. and Paseo de Roxas, Makati) or at booths in Glorietta and Alabang Town Center. Call Centex at 7521171, 7521173 or e-mail sevilla.sb@ayalafoundation.org.

32. Play Santa through Starbucks'

CHANGE/ F3



A MUST SEE HORROR-THRILLER FILM
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
WARNING
RICA Peralejo MARVIN Agustin and ALESSANDRA De Rossi introducing RYAN Agoncillo
ANDREA Del Rosario ANA Capri JAMES Blanco LIZA Lorena
MANIWALA
MAKIRAMDAM
MATAKOT...
Kutob
DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES
OPENS DECEMBER 25



BOSSING IS BACK!
THE COMEDY-FANTASY MOVIE OF THE YEAR!
VIC SOTTO KRISTINE HERMOSA
ALICE DIXSON
OYO BOY SOTTO BING LOYZAGA AIZA SEGUERRA
JEFFREY QUIZON AND VICTOR NERI
Enteng Kabisote 2
DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES
OKAY KA FAIRY KO...
THE LEGEND CONTINUES
CHRISTMAS DAY 2005
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2005
RED CARPET PREMIERE, DEC. 21, 2005, 7:30 PM @ THE PODIUM, CINEMA 2

Change the world in 100 ways

THE GIVING Guide comes with pretty cards and gift tags. ROGER CARPIO

From page F2

Project SparkHope, a tie-up with Unicef, which aims to help adopted barangays in the Philippines. Their previous efforts have helped equip the barangay's daycare centers, playgrounds and preschools. There are many ways to help: You can donate to the SparkHope Toy Drive (look for the bright red boxes in stores), buy a limited-edition giant Starbucks mug (a chunk of the proceeds will go to Project SparkHope), drink coffee like crazy and get yourself a Starbucks Traditions 2006 Planner (a donation will be made to SparkHope for every planner redeemed) or buy a special Unicef card in the stores—the recipient of this card will have a donation made in his or her name and can also enjoy a complimentary cup of Crème Brûlée Latte.

33. Bet you didn't know this. For every P500 you spend on makeup and toiletries at Rustan's Cosmetics and Toiletries and Rustan's Essenses, P1 goes to the Essenses Foundation, which takes care of many projects, including monthly feel-good workshops for cancer patients and survivors, book drives for the Capuchian Tertiary Sisters in Cebu, loans to indigent cancer patients and funding the printing of the 3rd Edition of the Primer on Women's Rights. That's another reason to get that new cheek stain.

34. Collect old clothes, bric-a-brac, toys and books and donate them to the Ateneo Special Education Society (Speed), a student organization catering to children with special needs. They will be selling these items in February at the SpRummage Sale which aims to raise funds for the Ateneo Speed Wishlist Program. Visit Area C7 (Speed Table), 2F Matteo Ricci Building, Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City or e-mail ateneo.speed@gmail.com for updates.

35. Bring cheer to kids confined in government hospitals by giving books, VCDs and toys in good condition for their use. Call Miggy's Corner at 0917-5291964 or e-mail migiscorner@gmail.com

36. Pack goodie bags with sandwiches, fruits, nuts, candies and juice and distribute them to people who have to work on Christmas Eve. Go around the city just before or after midnight and spread the Christmas spirit to gas station attendants, firemen, hospital employees, security guards, jeep, taxi and bus drivers and conductors—the list is endless.

37. Pick up a stray kitten off the streets and take good care of it.

38. Fill your car's back seat with stuffed animals and toys and distribute them to street kids.

HANDS On Manila's Giving Guide ROGER CARPIO

39. Help an elderly person cross the street.

40. Give up your MRT seat—and not just for a pregnant woman or an old lady.

41. Smile at everyone you cross paths with.

42. Compliment at least five people every week, or every day, if you're really good.

43. Give up the remote control and let your younger brother or older sister reign on the couch.

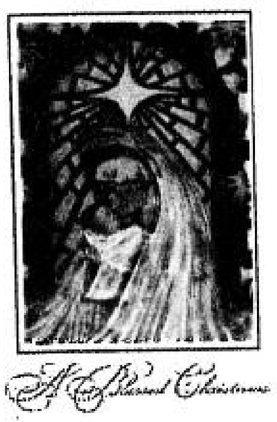
44. When you feel the need to snap at someone, bite your tongue.

45. Don't gossip for a week. Or a month, if you can help it.

46. Help the Philippine film industry and watch our own movies.

47. Surprise a good cab driver or waiter by giving a hefty tip.

48. Shop for a good cause. Gifts and Graces Fair Trade Foundation Inc., an NGO that helps market the goods of other NGOs, offers a lot of beautiful items (beadwork, soaps, candles, shawls, rosaries, etc.) made by 11 different NGOs. The products come in pretty packages and they're ready to be given as gifts. Call Gifts and Graces at 0906-3022668.



CHRISTMAS card features original artwork by Bro. Gerard Maria.

49. Fight AIDS by organizing an AIDS awareness campaign in your class.

50. Donating an hour of your earnings can go a long way, thanks to Children's Hour. Visit www.childrenshour.org.ph.

51. Keep packs of biscuits in your car or bag. When a child knocks on your window or begs, hand over the snack.

52. Buy beadwork from Papamelroti. By purchasing their products, you are helping

CHANGE/ F4

m&m's BRAND
CHOCOLATE CANDIES
JAZZ UP Your CHRISTMAS
Tune into M&M's® and move to the beat of fun & music this Christmas.
Chance upon WINNING cool prizes!
3 Honda Jazz
10
1000 (Ody
100
JOIN NOW!!!
Buy specially marked M&M's packs at participating stores and TEXT-IN your entries.
TEXT:
mmjazz Raffle Code/Name//Address//Age
SEND TO: 2219 (Globe, Touch Mobile & Sun Cellular)
638 (Smart, Addict Mobile, Talk n' Text)

Mechanics:
1. Buy specially marked packs of M&M's® Chocolate: Milk, Peanut, Crispy and Minis with an M&M's® Jazz Up Your Christmas sticker from participating establishments. Each pack will have a unique alphanumeric raffle code printed on it.
2. To join the promo, just text MMJAZZ raffle code/name/complete address/age to 2219 for Globe, Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular Subscribers and 638 for Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk n' Text Subscribers. P2.50 will be charged per text message sent.
Example: MMJAZZ A1234/Ann Garcia/8 Mango St. Project 4, Quezon City/18
For succeeding entries, just type MMJAZZ raffle code.
Example: MMJAZZ B5678
3. M&M's® packs with the Jazz Up Your Christmas stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
4. Prizes include: Total of 3 units Honda Jazz Cars, 10 units Sony Ericsson W800i Walkman™ Phones, 100 units Apple Mini i-Pods and 1,000 pcs. CD's from Odyssey Record Bars.
5. Weekly cut-off dates for entries will be every Sunday, 11:59pm.
6. Draws will be held in the presence of a representative from BFAD, Cube Interactive and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
7. Winners will be sent a text message with accompanying instructions on how to claim the prize. Winners must be prepared to present the text message notification together with the M&M's® wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged, altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with no promo stickers and vice versa will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
8. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
9. Prizes are non-transferable and not convertible to cash.
10. All prizes are tax paid.
11. Employees of Master Foods Philippines Inc., all their agencies, suppliers, partners and sponsors, including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
M&M's® Registered Trademark of Mars, Incorporated ©Mars, 2005. Promo will run from Oct. 16 - Dec. 31, 2005. Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. [illegible] Series of 2005.

Although its been said many times, many ways

AYALA CINEMAS
130- 6634
ADMIT ONE
VALID FOR SINGLE USE ONLY
Glorietta 1 & 4 / Greenbelt 1 & 3 / Alabang Town Center
PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS AT THE BACK
6634

This season, greet them all over again by giving them The Ayala Cinemas' Prepaid Tickets

Get a Complimentary Ticket for every purchase of ten (10) Prepaid Tickets.
Available at any Ayala Cinemas' ticketbooths.
(Alabang Town Center, Glorietta 1, Glorietta 4, Greenbelt 1 & Greenbelt 3)

AYALA CINEMAS

Promo period: Nov. 18 to Dec. 25, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4022. Series of 2005.

With only the best finds for the holidays, last minute shopping has never been this fun... Join the Noel shopping rush!!!

NOEL "the discovery bazaar"
DEC 21-23, 2005
Christmas @2005 shop expo

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

World Trade Center Metro Manila, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
10:00 am - 8:00 pm (bazaar hours)

highlights & special events
- ✓ Annual Gift-Giving to GMA Kapuso Foundation Kids together with GMA Artists
- ✓ GMA Artists Celebrity Bazaar
- ✓ Fashion shows
- ✓ Storytelling, face painting, magical moments, mini exhibit and arts & crafts for children ages 1-10
- ✓ Art Day

Event Manager:
CUT UNLIMITED, INC.
TEL +63.2.6870654, 6872955
FAX +63.2.6870604
EMAIL cut@pacific.net.ph

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF
GMA KAPUSO FOUNDATION
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OFFICIAL BOOTH CONTRACTOR
CENTREX

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Change the world in 100 ways

From page F3

provide livelihood to street moms who used to sell *sampaguita* but are now creating works of beauty.

53. Hold a garage sale and donate the proceeds to a charity of your choice.

54. Ask a cab driver to drive through your favorite fast food place and treat him to a burger.

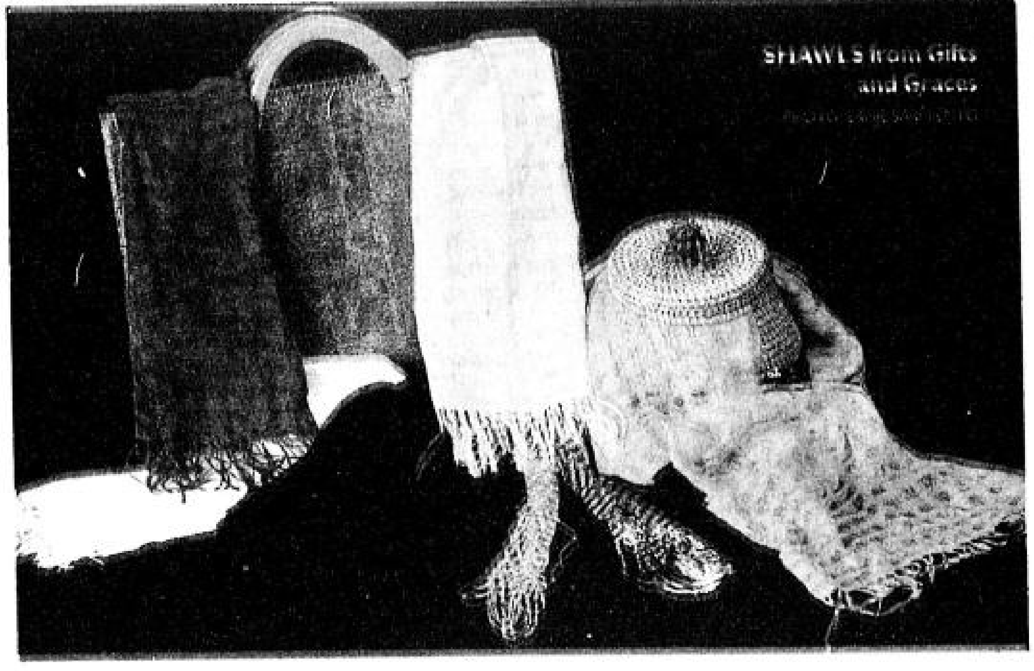
55. Become a volunteer firefighter.

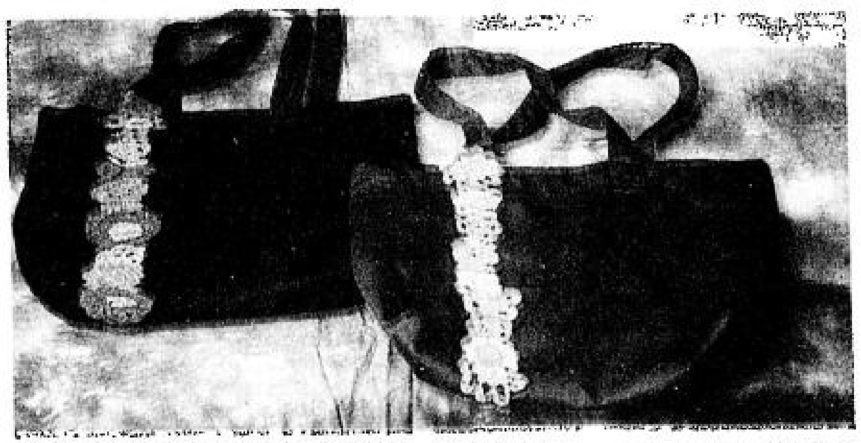
56. Learn CPR and the Heimlich maneuver. You might just save someone's life one day.

57. Give your loved ones the gift of music and hope by buying them tickets for the Light A Million Mornings concert which features the Loboc Children's Choir and the Pundaquit Virtuosi. The show is a musical benefit for the Tuloy Foundation, which houses and provides education for 650 street children from all over the country. Tickets are sold for P300 and P600. They come with pretty cards, envelopes and stickers so you can give them as gifts. Tickets are available at all Hen Lin food outlets, Sarabia Optical stores, the Bellevue Hotel in Alabang and CCP Box Office. Please call 0906-2573079.

58. Help local communities grow by paying them a visit, bringing your friends there for a vacation and recommending them to other tourists.

59. Put up your own Teen Health Quarters franchise with the help of Foundation for Adolescent Development so you can help more teenagers become more aware about their sexual health. Contact Aurora-Silayan Go, FAD president at fadinc@pworld.com.ph or fadinc@codewan.com.ph or call 7341788.


SHAWLS from Gifts and Graces


BAGS from Gifts and Graces
ERNIE SARMIENTO

60. If your friends run to you when they have problems because you're a great listener and you give good advice, you can continue doing this for more people. Become a Dial-A-Friend or E-mail-A-Friend volunteer counselor by visiting www.teenfad.ph and answering the online application form.

61. If someone drops something, pick it up.

62. Don't drink and drive.

63. Buy a bunch of flowers from Dangwa and hand them to different people you meet.

64. Make the wishes of terminally ill children come true by becoming part of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Visit Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Philippines at Suite 303 I-Care Building, 167 Legaspi cor. De La Rosa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City, call 8401553 or log on to www.makeawish.org.ph.

65. Conserve energy. Not only will it help save the planet, you can also save money. Now that it's cooler, use your air-conditioner less. Turn off the lights and your computer when not in use. Don't open your refrigerator door too much and cover food to avoid moisture build-up.

66. Report animal cruelty to PAWS (www.paws.org.ph) and PETA (www.peta.org).

67. Pray.

68. Take the cue from Ed Douglas Miller of the British company Remarkable. He has taken recycling to another level—by making notebooks out of old tires, rulers out of old computer printers. He sells pens emblazoned with the words, "We used to be paper cups." You can do the same on a smaller scale. Yesterday's mayo jar can be tomorrow's pencil holder. Recyle, recyle, recycle.

69. The National Shrine of the Sacred Heart will be holding their traditional family gift-giving project tomorrow. They will be giving basic items like rice, sugar, milk, sardines and clothes to 2,000 poor families in their parish. It's not too late, donations can still be made. Please visit 4 Sacred Heart St., San Antonio Village, Makati City, or call 8956331 or 8996107.

70. Make a difference in someone's life by helping build a home for them. Become a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity's Youth Build by visiting www.habitat.org.ph.

71. If you are a doctor or a dentist, organize a medical mission with your peers.

72 Help Bantay Bata raise funds by adopting a "Barya Mo, Buhay Ko" coinbank which you can use to collect money in your school, office or home. Call Cynthia Gonzales or Marianne Salvador at 4156626, or e-mail bantaybata163@abs.pinoycentral.com.

73. Donate books to the Aklat, Buklat, Mulat project of The National Book Development Board. Call 9293677 or e-mail helpdesk@nbdb.gov.ph.

74. Spend the day at an old folks' home and get to know the people who live there.

75. If you love babies, become a volunteer for CRIBS (Create Responsive Infants By Sharing) Philippines Inc., a compassionate group of people committed to the caring, healing, recovery and development of abandoned, surrendered, neglected and sexually abused children and their families. You can spend two hours in the morning (9-11 a.m.) and two hours in the afternoon (2-4 p.m.) caring for the babies. There are currently 25 babies waiting for your love and attention. If you want to volunteer, call Liway Flores, the volunteer resource program officer, at 6471329, 6818078, 6815921, or 6819705 or e-mail cribsnet@info.com.ph. Visit CRIBS Philippines Inc. at 30 Major Dizon St., IVC, Marikina City.

76. Forgive.

77. Ask for forgiveness.

78. When on the verge of blowing up, take a deep breath and count to 10.

79. If you don't have anything nice to say, stay silent.

80. Try to do at least one nice thing for someone every single day.

81. The animals at the Philippine Animal Welfare Society's Animal Rehabilitation Center have their own wish list. Make our furry friends happy by donating collars, leashes, kennel cabs, carriers or cages, blankets, towels, rags, detergent powder, disinfectant, scratching posts for cats, chew toys for dogs, stainless steel pet bowls, low wooden tables where we newly-operated animals are placed while waiting for them to wake up, syringes, vaccines, medicine, surgical materials/equipment, pet vitamins, wet cat food in cans, wet dog food in cans, pails, basins, water containers, cleaning materials, especially brooms *walis tingting*. Visit www.paws.org.ph.

82. Beauty can be more than skin deep. If you're a makeup junkie, try to look for offers that do more you than just improve your skin; MAC cosmetics, for instance, is famous for its Viva Glam lipstick program: each cent of the buying price (and not just a piddling percentage) of a Viva Glam product goes to fund research and assistance to AIDS victims. This year's offering is the Viva Glam V palette, which contains all of the Viva Glam lipsticks and one lip gloss. For once, spending on makeup isn't as self-indulgent.

83. Give at least three hugs a day. It's good for the heart.

84. Malnutrition is a problem and the first step to beating this problem is identifying it. Unicef is trying to raise funds to buy salter-type weighing scales which cost P2,000 each to be given to barangays. Health workers can use these scales to check if kids are malnourished. Right now, over 4,000 scales are needed. If you wish to help Unicef buy weighing scales, call 7581000 or go to any Metrobank branch and deposit your donation to the Unicef account.

85. Bake cookies and bring them to school or the office.

86. Put all your coins into a piggy bank and donate it to your chosen charity at the end of the year.

87. Stop and give directions to a stranger.

88. Don't throw trash out of your car window. Please.

89. Stop spitting on the streets.

90. Give mom and dad a break by helping your siblings with their homework.

91. Send someone mobile phone credits for no reason at all. It will be a nice surprise.

92. Establish relationships with your neighbors by participating in sports festivals and other activities in your community.

93. Mend broken friendships.

94. Count all your blessings. Never take them for granted.

95. Let go of all your pain. The world could use less negativity.

96. Fight cancer by reminding all your female friends to self-examine their breasts monthly.

97. Give your tired mom or dad an impromptu massage.

98. Take care of a sick relative.

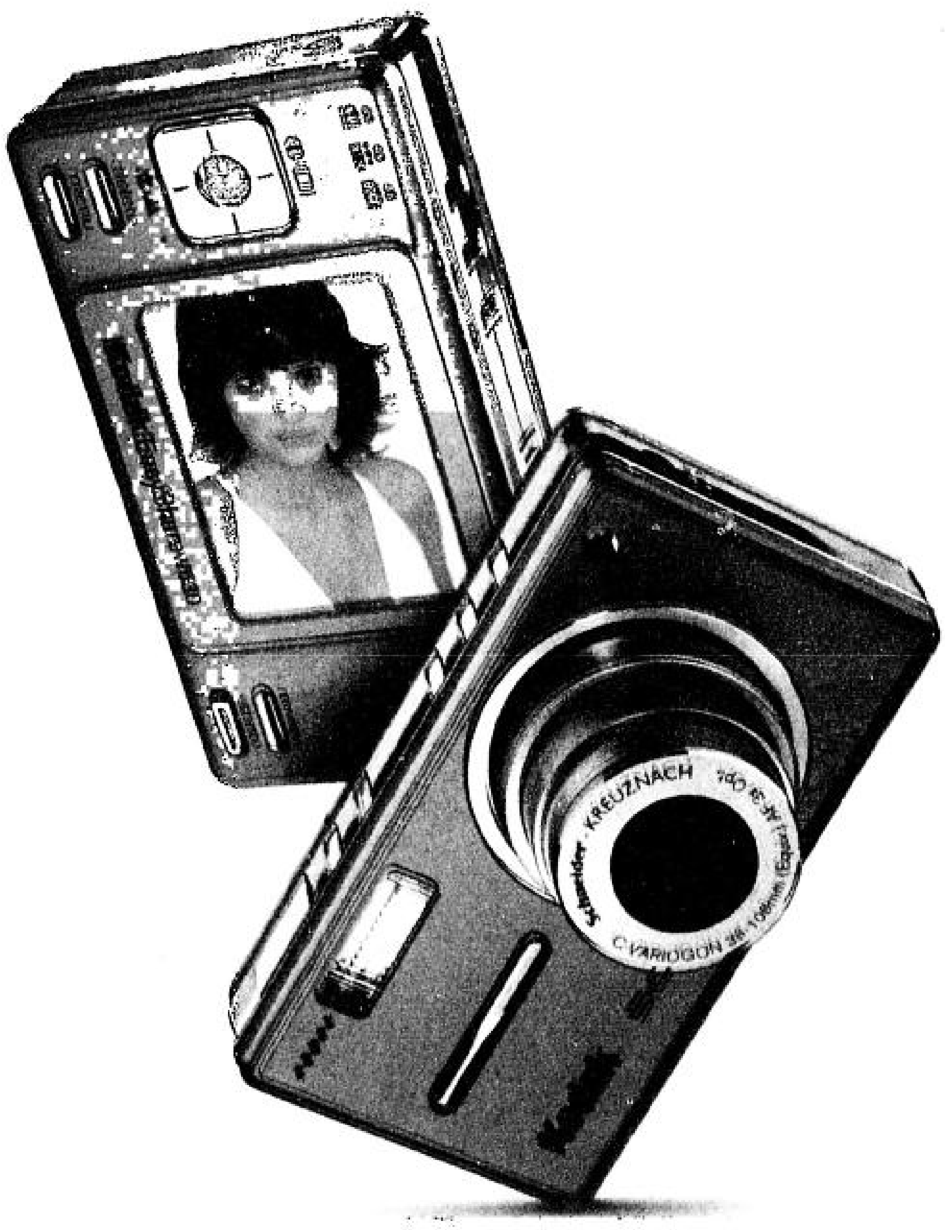
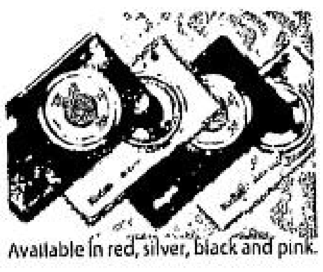
99. Surprise everyone in the jeep by paying for their fare.

100. Clip this list, add your own ideas and pass it on to other friends.

E-mail more good deed ideas to ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

GIVE the gift of music and hope by buying tickets to the "Light a Million Mornings" concert.
ROGER CARPIO

GUILT-FREE DESSERT. Enjoy desserts at the Diamond Hotel and help Pathways to Higher Education send poor students to college.



VERY HOT DEAL

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now only P20,995

AN AMAZINGLY STYLISH CAMERA AT SURPRISINGLY GREAT VALUE.

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Inquire about 0% Interest on 6 months payment scheme in participating stores.

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Brothers for a cause

LONG BEFORE THEIR ORGANIZATION became a buzzword, student facilitators of San Beda College's Peace Retreat Movement (PRM) had become known throughout the campus as "big brothers" who helped foster love for God and family during student retreats and recollections.

While life has taken its members down different paths, the bonds formed and life lessons learned in college draw them all together once a year, every Christmas, to help spread God's love and share their blessings with their less fortunate brethren, but this time beyond the walls of their alma mater.

While the group has no formal name, these Bedan big brothers have been organizing Christmas outreach projects for the impoverished residents of a small island called Pulo just off Barangay Tangos in Navotas.

There are an estimated 150 families composed of around 200 adults and 400 children on the island. They live with neither electricity nor water, as the local government and private groups are still trying to resolve arrangements for these utilities. Charcoal making is the residents' main livelihood, but some scour for fish around the island's murky, garbage-filled waters.

Every year, the group pools its resources together to buy enough gifts and groceries to ensure that families in Pulo and neighboring towns are also able to enjoy Christmas. Gifts and games are par for the course, but what's more important than entertainment and food is the spiritual encouragement the group tries to impart to the residents.

This year, each family received bibles and rosaries after a Mass officiated by Fr. Angelo Legal, OSB, the group's spiritual director. "*'Wag natin kakalimutan magdasal at tumawag sa Panginoon sa gitna ng ating paghihirap. Ngunit 'wag din nating kalimutang magsikap habang tayo'y nagdarasal. Dapat sabay ang dalawa*," he reminded them. (Do not forget to pray and call on the Lord when times are hard. But at the same time, let us work hard. Hard work and prayer must go together.)

After the Mass, each family was given groceries for their Noche Buena, toys and clothes, food from URC—Jack 'n Jill products like Taquitos, Magic Flakes, Pretzels, Payless and C2 Iced Tea. Jollibee has also been supportive of the outreach, giving food and toys from its Ma-Aga ang Pasko sa Jollibee toy and book drive.

After a long yet fulfilling day, it was enough for the group to see Pulo's children playing with their toys, munching on their snacks, and mothers excitedly inspecting their groceries, all in eager anticipation of a happy Christmas on their island.

Call 0920-9039498.

2BU! YEARENDER SURVEY

Vote for the best and worst of 2005

WHO WILL BE THE BIG winners of 2005?

We want you to be the judge again. Tell us who you think deserve to be hailed the Best and Worst of 2005 under the following categories:

Music: Band, song, singer, radio station, radio DJ, music video, concert

Film: Movie, movie theater, actor, actress

Fashion: Male model, female model, fashion designer, brand, shop, trend, accessory, fashion icon

Health and beauty: Beauty product, spa, salon, hairstyle, fitness regimen

Literature: Book, writer, magazine

Food: Restaurant, dish, fast food

Sports: Athlete, UAAP team, NCAA team

Television: Commercial, TV show, TV actress, TV actor, VJ, music channel

Technology: Website, gadget, game

Send your answers to 2bU! Best and Worst of 2005 Poll, Philippine Daily INQUIRER, Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague St., Makati; or e-mail contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph

Please have your answers in by 12 nn on Dec. 25.

together & safe

Avoid "octopus" connections.
Only a maximum of three sets
of Christmas lights can be strung together
and connected to one outlet.

Do not leave the Christmas lights on unattended.
Only Christmas lights in good condition,
with no frayed wires or with no broken sockets,
can be kept on indefinitely.

Outdoor type Christmas lights
are strictly for outdoor use only
and must have:
- A rubber seal between the bulb and its socket
- Sealed wires entering the socket or bonding into the bulb socket
- Heavier or thicker insulation than the indoor type

Each convenience outlet
must not be more than 200 watts of load.
Outlets for major home appliances
are designed to carry bigger loads.

Buy only Christmas lights with
the *Bureau of Product Standards (PS)* mark.
This means that the product
passed stringent safety standards.

Keep Christmas lights away from children's reach.
A small strand of wire protruding
from these lights may harm them.

Keep firecrackers away from Christmas trees.
Flying embers may set the tree on fire
especially if the tree is made of combustible materials
like dried twigs or branches.

Don't use firecrackers and fireworks
near Meralco overhead facilities.
Pyrotechnics may cause major fires and accidents.

A blessed
and
safe
Christmas
to all!

MERALCO
may liwanag ang buhay

1.
- Make sure to buy Christmas lights of good quality to prevent accidents that could lead to fires.
- Choose the blinking Christmas lights rather than the non-blinking ones for they consume less electricity.
- Don't plug all your Christmas lights in one socket. Use multiple outlets.

2.
- Turn off and unplug all Christmas lights and "parols" before sleeping.
- For lights and decors outside your homes and offices, use only those designated for outdoor use.
- Use bulbs of lower wattage for your Christmas light fixtures so you can save on your electric bill.

3.
- Don't leave the Christmas tree switched on and candles lighted overnight to prevent fires.
- Keep flammable objects away from your Christmas tree. All incandescent light sources, no matter how small they are, produce heat and can cause fires.

It is not the number of Christmas lights you have on that make for a bright Christmas. It is the light in our hearts that glows the brightest.

Celebrate more.
Pay less.

The power to change power.

MERALCO

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

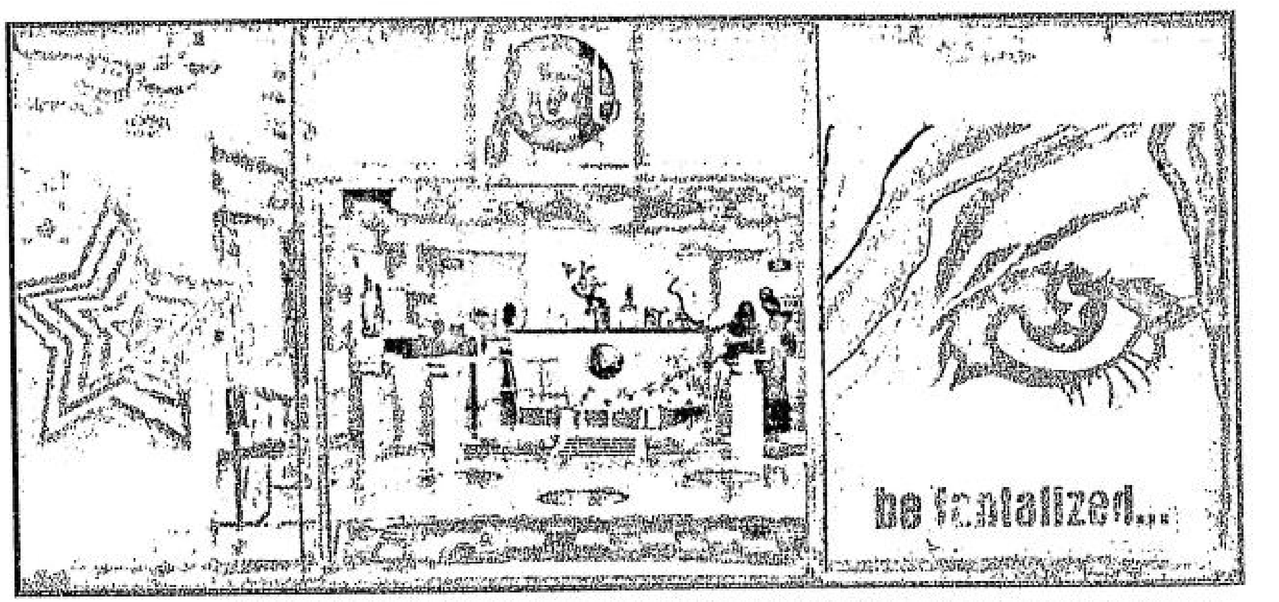
Hi-tech hub gets HOLIDAY LOOK

AT THE HUB BY GLOBE TELECOM, THE LOOK of Christmas will be in keeping with its high style-oriented approach to pushing technology and design with visually captivating in-store merchandising campaigns. In fact, the Hub windows at Greenbelt 3, The Podium, Power Plant Mall, Glorietta 4, and Greenhills have become the stores' year-round added attractions.

This Christmas, Globe has pulled all stops to come up with attractive window displays that would entice even more people to enter and shop at the Hub. The public will see the latest and upcoming mobile phones featured in awesome installations as part of the Hub's groundbreaking Holiday Window Display Contest. This event reaffirms the Hub's position as the ultimate mobile phone gallery—offering people the pleasure of a modern shopping experience by letting them view, touch, and tinker with the phone models.

Working with the tagline "Be tantalized!," Globe tapped interior design teacher Leo Almeria to pick 10 fresh graduates from the Philippine School of Interior Design to form the five teams tasked to come up with visual treats for the Hub's Christmas window displays. Each team was given one window to style, using Christmas and a featured mobile phone to serve as inspirations.

"This contest among young upcoming designers shows what the Hub is all about. Globe should take this further because this project is a great fusion of all the elements of technology, design, and the pulse of the target market," Almeria said,



THE ROCKWELL Hub window by Kat Bautista and Vikki Ranada uses giant illustrations of a layered star and a layered eye to highlight the desirable Nokia N70.

Dorothy Yap and Carlo Mecate, who were assigned to dress up the Hub window at The Podium, showcased the Motorola ROKR E1, which comes with iTunes. They used the phones to form three stylized lanterns.

Ann Dee and Joliot Ong, who worked on the Greenhills Hub, played up the camera- and video-ready Nokia N90 by placing its models inside clear acrylic "bubbles"—accented with strips of satin wrapped in wire mesh—that they had installed to function as Christmas balls. It was a perfect way to highlight the twist, shoot, and fold design of the phone.

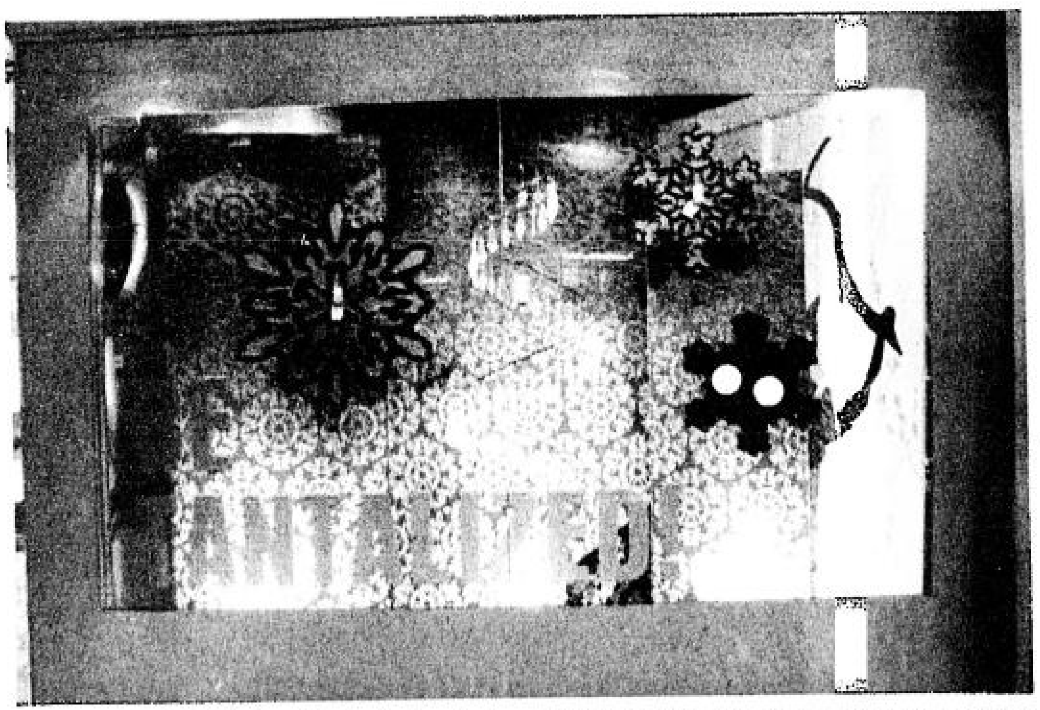
Given the assignment to make the Rockwell Hub ready for Christmas, Vikki Ranada and Kat Bautista came up with an avant-garde design that featured an oversized illustration of a layered eye and a layered star. The Nokia N70 camcorder-phone was cocooned at the center of the eye to epitomize desire.

Meanwhile, Leni Rivera and Jamie Tan, the duo in charge of the Glorietta Hub, showcased the Sony Ericsson W550i by placing it within a suspended Christmas tree adorned with crystals. Layers of snowflakes with dazzling glass beads cradled more phones in the background, making the setup elegant yet hip.

AT THE Greenbelt Hub, Melissa Ongsue and Mark See pose in front of their picture-perfect display featuring the Samsung D600.

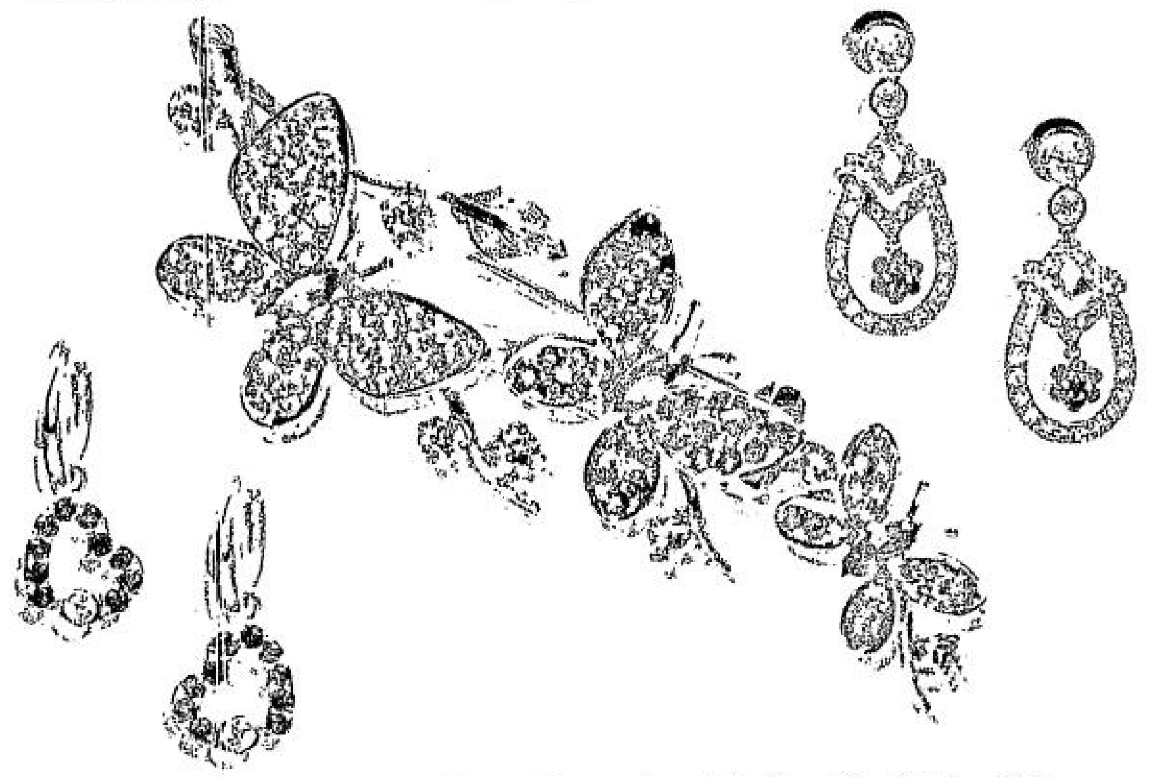
Melissa Ongsue and Mark See, on the other hand, derived inspiration for the Greenbelt Hub window display from their assigned mobile phone—the Samsung D600. Opting for a neo-Baroque look, they featured the Samsung D600 within a gold-colored picture frame. Their display emphasized the Samsung D600's formidable camera-phone feature.

The Hub holiday window displays will be on view until the end of December. The HUB by Globe Telecom has stores at Greenbelt 3, The Podium, Power Plant Mall, Glorietta 4 and Greenhills.



THE GLORIOUS Glorietta Hub window designed by Leni Rivera and Jamie Tan showcased the Sony Ericsson W550i within a stylized Christmas tree adorned with crystals.

PODIUM PLEASERS. (Left to right) Motorola Communications head of marketing Mari Litonjua, Motorola Communications Philippines sales manager Darren Sy, Dorothy Yap, Carlo Mecate, and Globe Telecom's Patty Forbes



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www.moissaniteph.com

MOISSANITE
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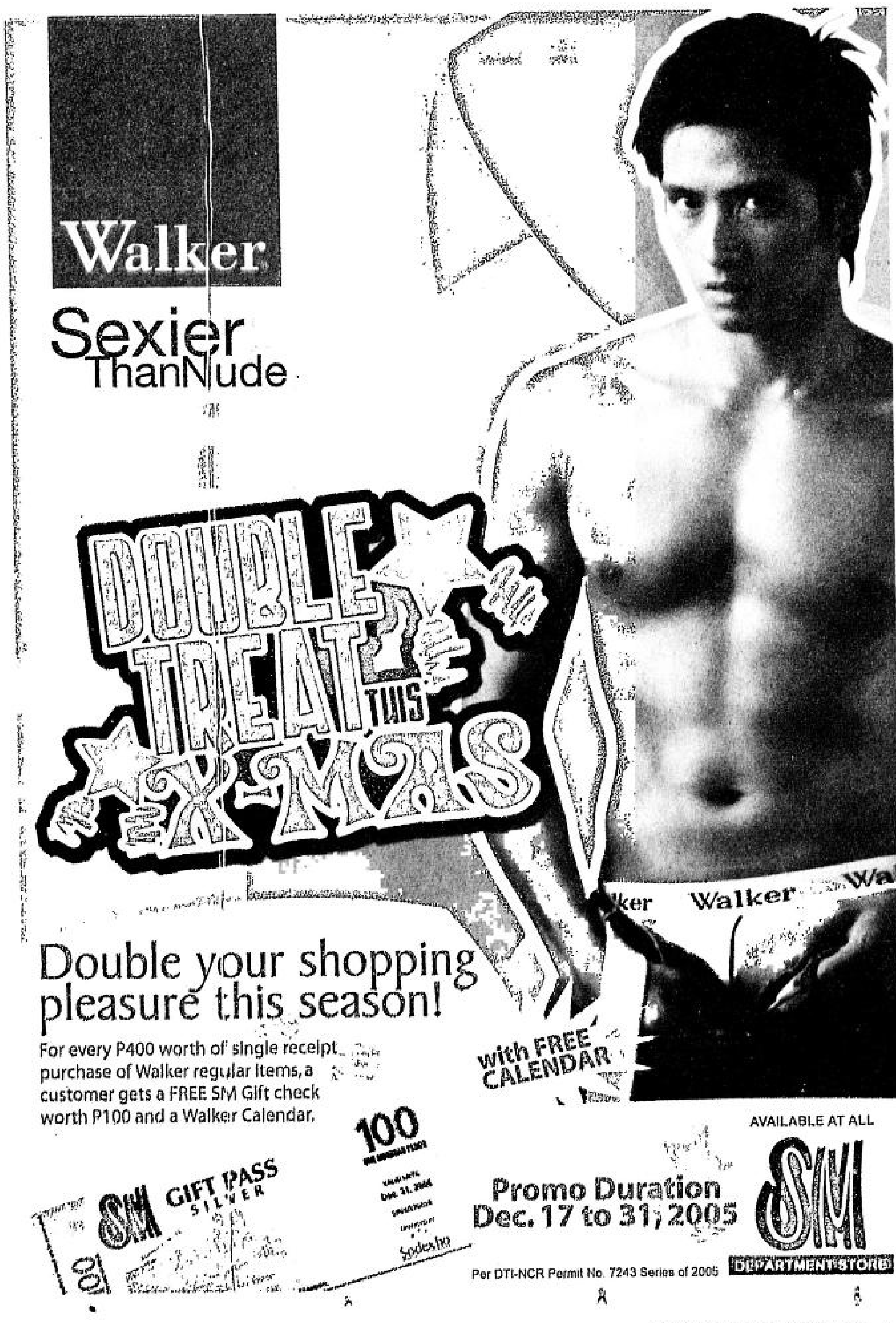
CHARLES & COLVARD



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 7243 Series of 2005

ABC-5 airs UST Christmas concert

THE CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT, "Yuletide Tunes: UST 2005 Christmas Concert," will air on Dec. 22, 4:30 p.m., on ABC-5.

The annual Christmas concert was held last Dec. 7 at the Santissimo Rosario Church (UST Chapel) and featured musical talents from the Pontifical University.

Performing classical and contemporary Christmas music were pianist Raul Sunico, also the dean of the UST Conservatory of Music, with soprano Rachelle Gerodias, tenor Lemuel de la Cruz, the UST Singers, Coro Tomasino, UST Symphony Band, UST Percussion Ensemble, and the UST Symphony Orchestra conducted by professor Hermenegildo Ranera. Also performing were the UST Salinggawi Dancers.

Meanwhile, the annual UST Paskuhan was held yesterday (Dec. 20) at the UST football grounds. The celebration opened with a Mass and closed with the traditional grand fireworks display.

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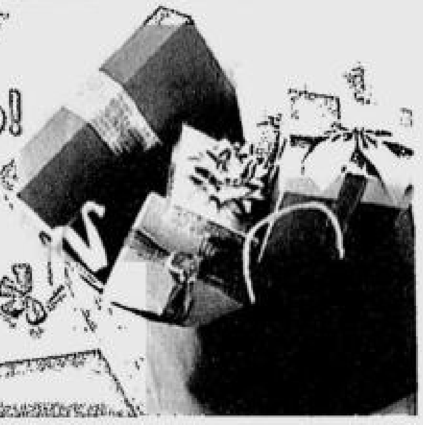
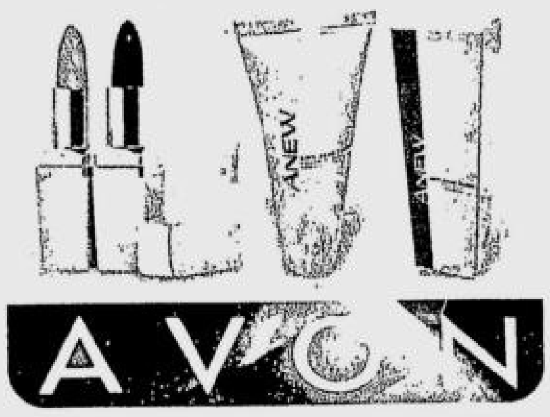
Holiday Shopping Rush!

4 Days to go!



Wardrobe must-haves

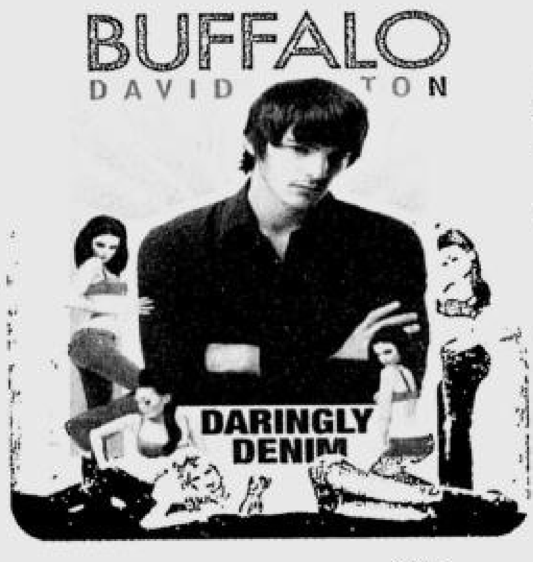


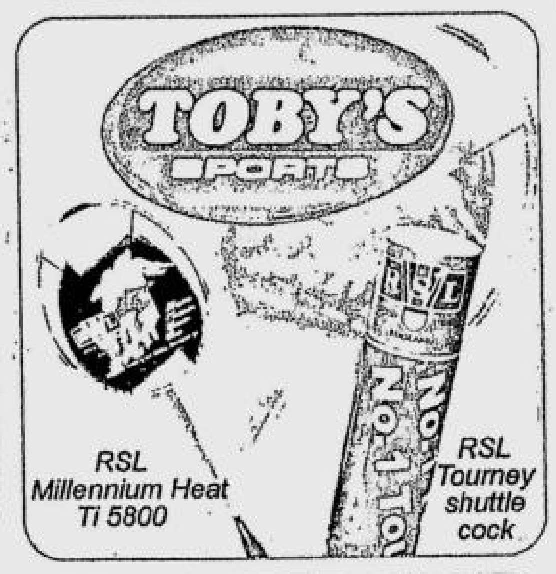
Camp
camp beverly hills

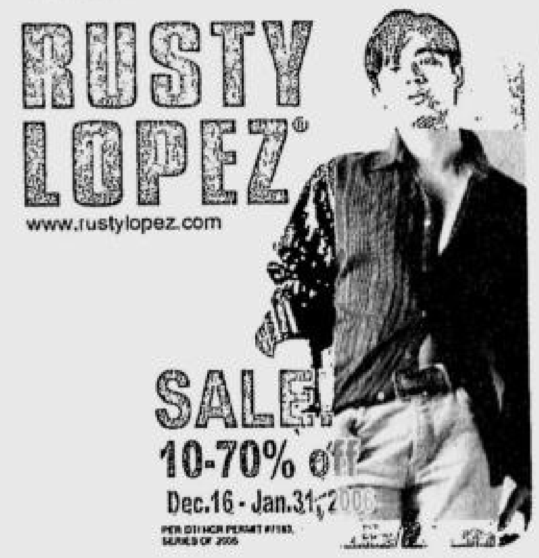
TOKYO FASHION

PRIMADONNA

Picks of the season


BUFFALO
DAVID TON
DARINGLY DENIM


TOBY'S
SPORTS
RSL Millennium Heat Ti 5800
RSL Tourney shuttle cock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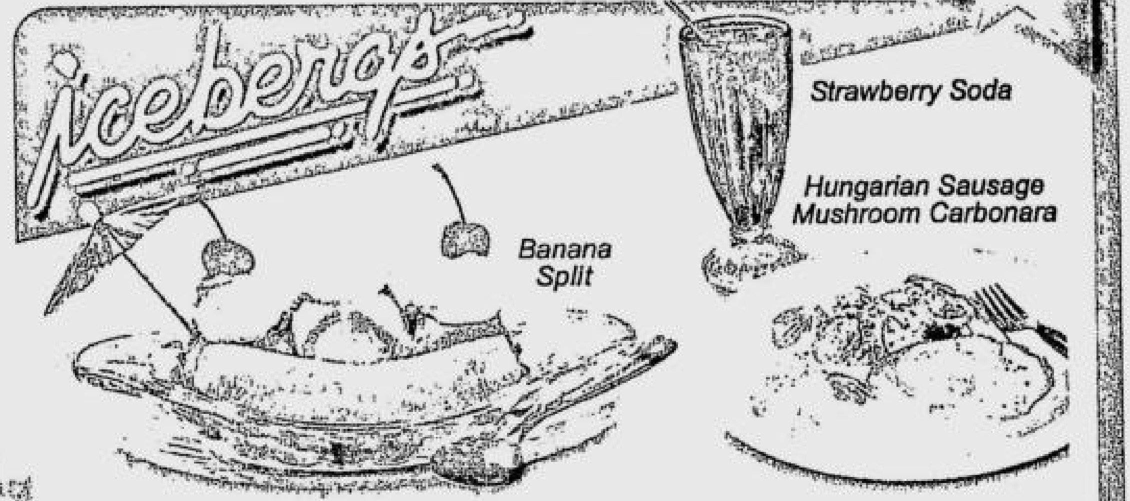
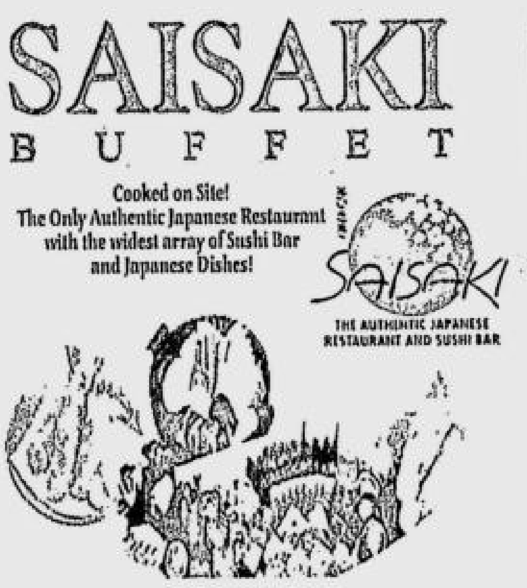
Celebrate the holidays


icebergs
Strawberry Soda
Hungarian Sausage Mushroom Carbonara
Banana Split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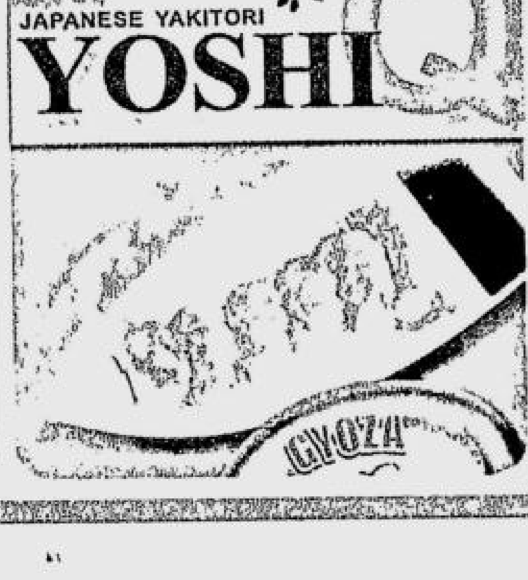
Red Ribbon
Get To Know Our New Cake
Tiramisu Meltdown

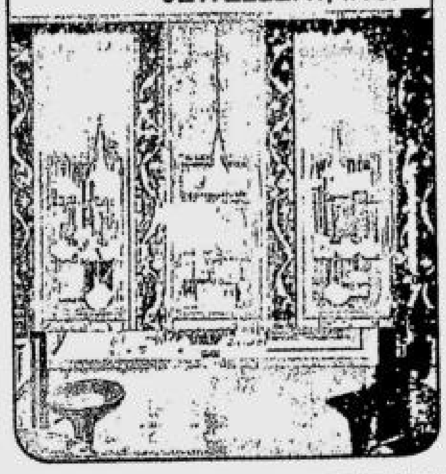

JAPANESE YAKITORI
YOSHI Q
GYOZA

SM SUPERMALLS

Christmas Sh

Season's jewels

KRISTINE
JEWELLERY, INC.



Iradiam

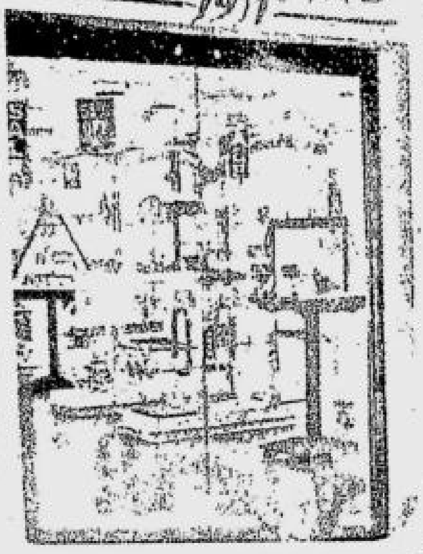
Ruby Birthstone
w/ Diamonds

Men's ring
w/ Diamonds

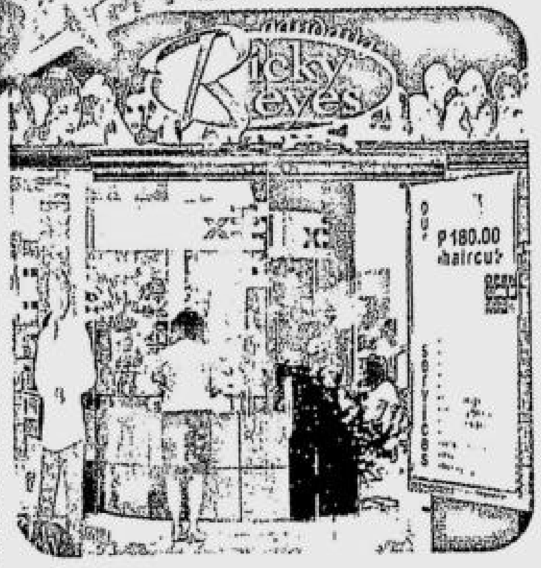
time lock

Titanium
Seiko
Divers

Oceanic 1911



Holiday make-over



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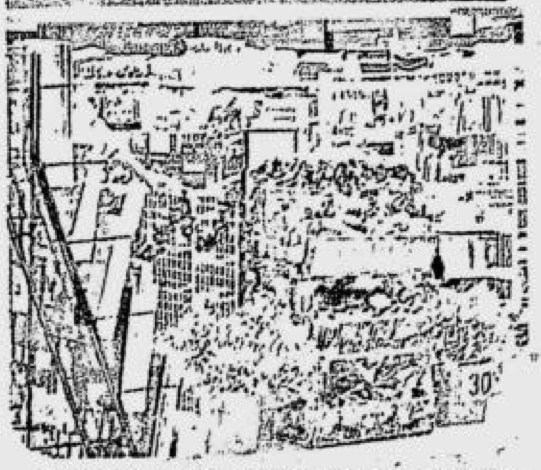
Holiday accessories

Diplomat

Expressions



SPECIAL TOY CENTER

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Sleeping Santa
on Santa's Pillow

Santa Birdfeeder

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OPTICAL Works

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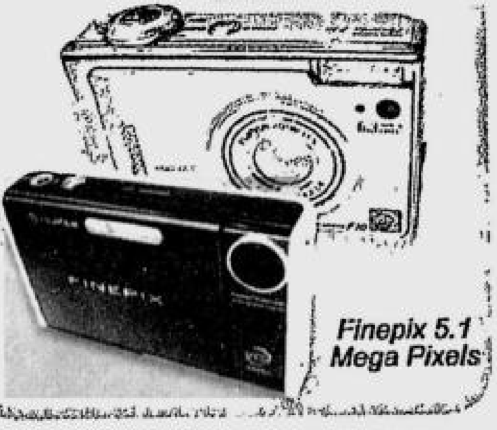
Finepix 6.3
Mega Pixels



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Per DTI - NCR permit No. 7139 Series of 2005

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Yuletide messages

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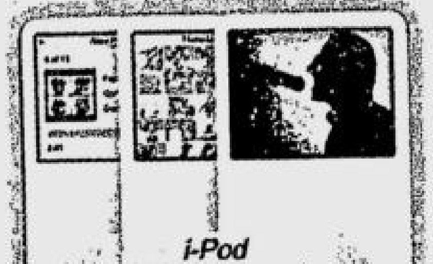
Computers this Christmas

AppleCenter



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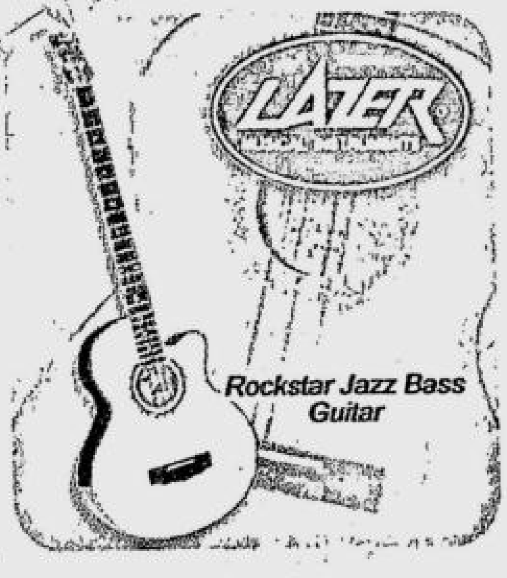
INFORMATICS

Season's music

LAZER

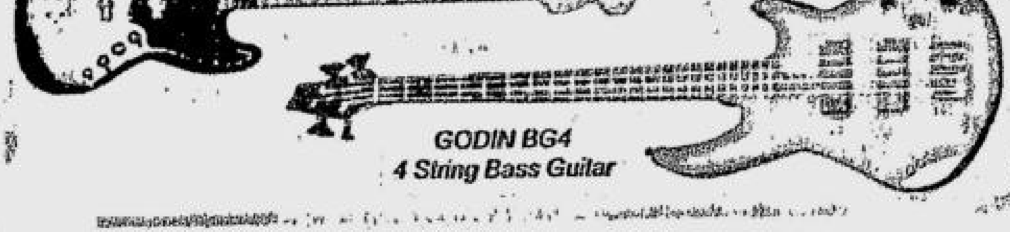


Rockstar Jazz Bass
Guitar

LYRIC

Kawai Baby Grand
Piano

Perfect Pitch



YAMAHA BB604
4 String Bass Guitar

GODIN BG4
4 String Bass Guitar

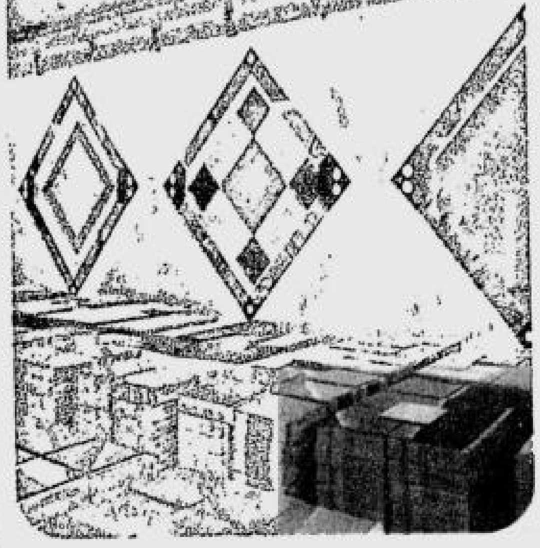
Home for the season

dimensione

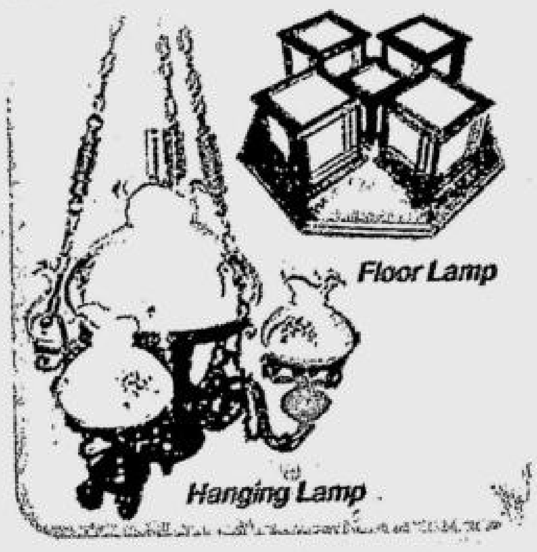
Sceno Bar Chair

La Casa Rica

FLOOR CENTER



PROVIDENT LIGHTS


Floor Lamp
Hanging Lamp

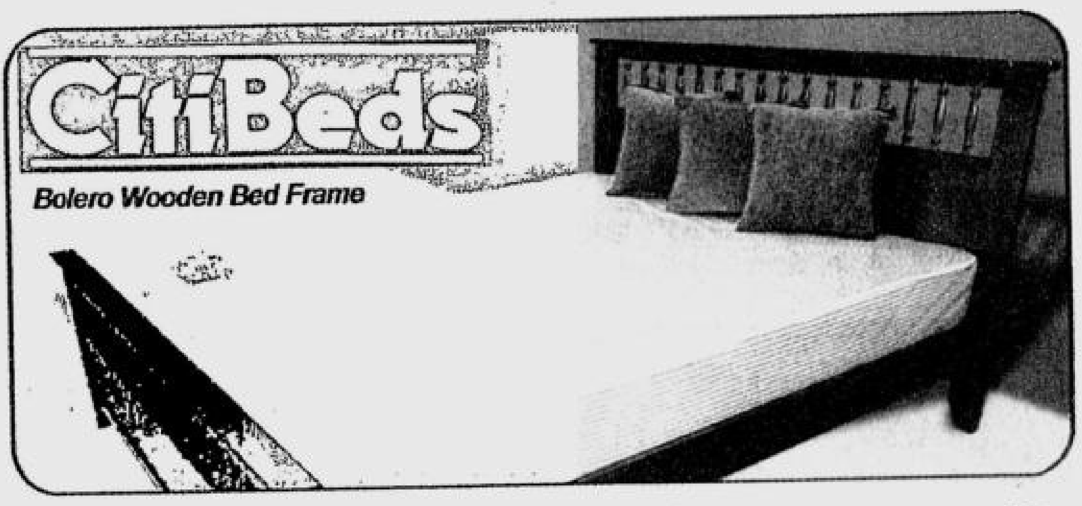
FRAME PLUS
CORPORATION

KlappStuhl
Furniture

DCPL High Back Chair

CitiBeds

Bolero Wooden Bed Frame



WM WESTERN

Canon
Digital IXUS

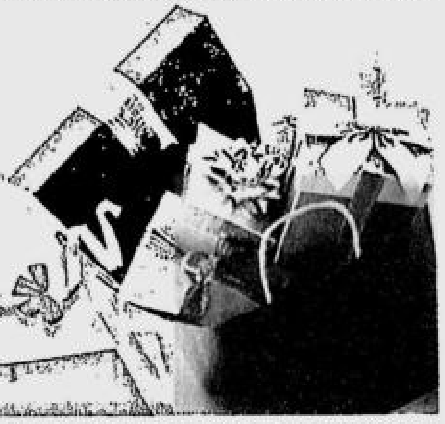
Cranberry
Red
Jet Black
Ultra Violet

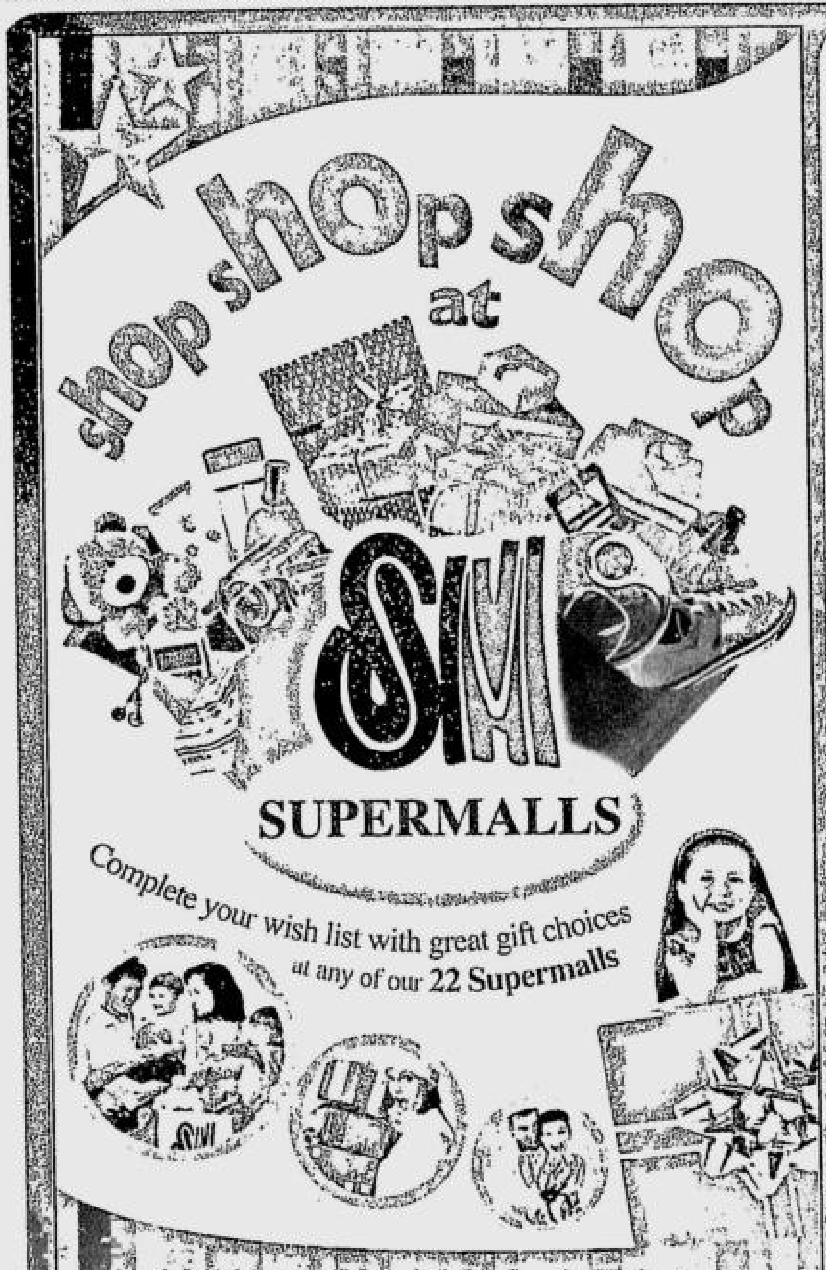
5th Ave
ELECTRONIC CITY

Home Theater

SM SUPERMALLS

Fun Family Christmas

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at the entertainment plaza
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sarah geronimo

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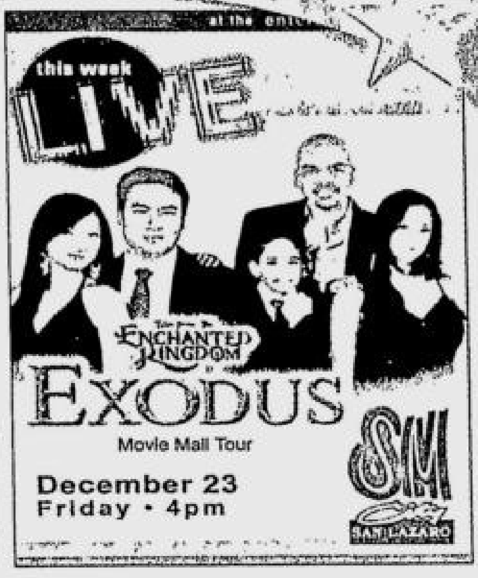
at the entertainment plaza
this week LIVE
ENCHANTED KINGDOM

EXODUS

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December 23
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It's open to everyone!
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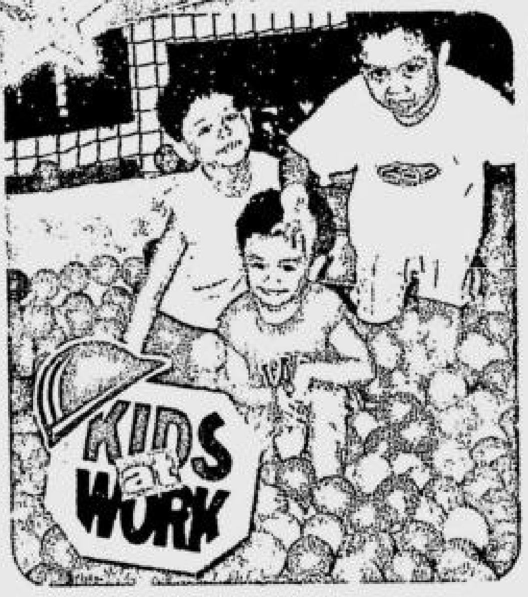
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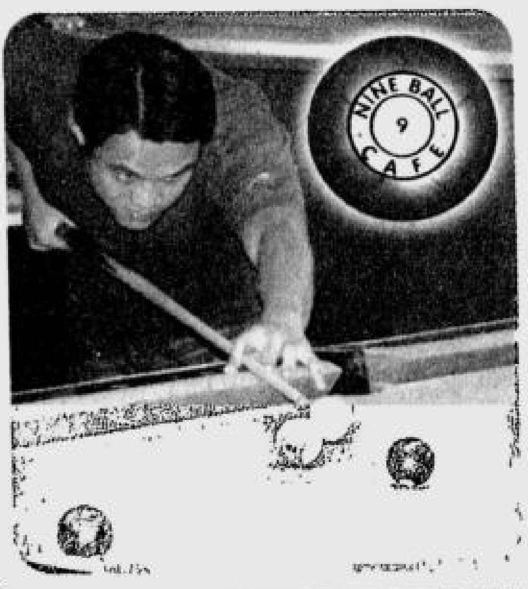
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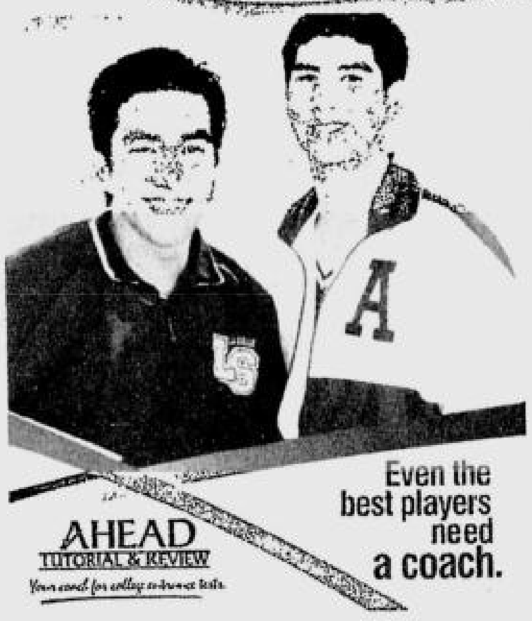

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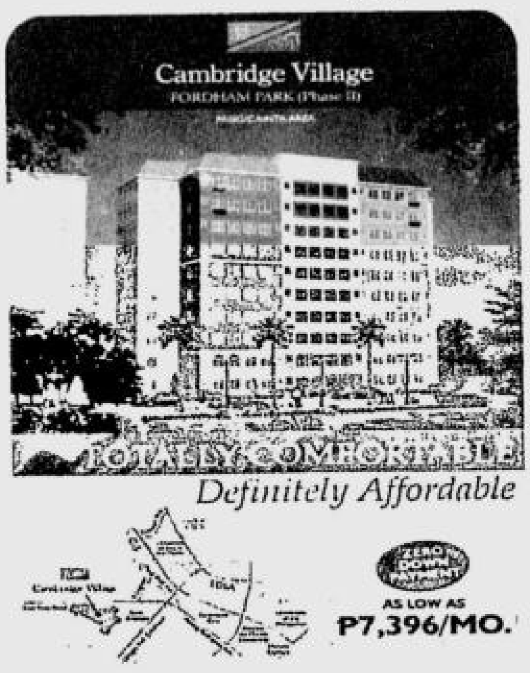
PHILAM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